PREFACES,
BIOGRAPHICAL
AND
CRITICAL,
TO THE
WORKS
OF THE
ENGLISH POETS.
BY SAMUEL JOHNSON.

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M DCC LXXXI.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACES

TO

ADDISON,

BLACKMORE,

AND

SHEFFIELD.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ADDISON.

JOSEPH ADDISON was born on the firſt of May, 1672, at Milſton, of which his father, Lancelot Addiſon, was then rector, near Ambroſbury in Wiltſhire, and, appearing weak and unlikely to live, he was chriſtened the ſame day. After the uſual domeſtick education, which, from the character of his father, may be reaſonably ſuppoſed to have given him ſtrong impreſſions of piety, he was committed to the care of

Mr. Naiſh at Ambroſbury, and afterwards of Mr. Taylor at Saliſbury.

Not to name the ſchool or the maſters of men illuſtrious for literature, is a kind of hiſtorical fraud, by which honeſt fame is injuriouſly diminiſhed: I would therefore trace him through the whole proceſs of his education. In 1683, in the beginning of his twelfth year, his father being made dean of Lichfield, naturally carried his family to his new reſidence, and, I believe, placed him for ſome time, probably not long, under Mr. Shaw, then maſter of the ſchool at Lichfield, father of the late Dr. Peter Shaw. Of this interval his biographers have given no account, and I know it only from a ſtory of a *barring-out* told me,

me, when I was a boy, by Andrew Corbet of Shropſhire, who had heard it from Mr. Pigot his uncle.

The practice of *barring-out* was a ſavage licenſe practiſed in many ſchools to the end of the laſt century, by which the boys, when the periodical vacation drew near, growing petulant at the approach of liberty, ſome days before the time of regular receſs, took poſſeſſion of the ſchool, of which they barred the doors, and bade their maſter defiance from the windows. It is not eaſy to ſuppoſe that on ſuch occaſions the maſter would do more than laugh; yet, if tradition may be credited, he often ſtruggled hard to force or ſurpriſe the garriſon. The maſter, when Pigot was

a ſchool-boy, was *barred-out* at Lichfield, and the whole operation, as he ſaid, was planned and conducted by Addiſon.

To judge better of the probability of this ſtory, I have enquired when he was ſent to the Chartreux; but, as he was not one of thoſe who enjoyed the Founder's benefaction, there is no account preſerved of his admiſſion. At the ſchool of the Chartreux, to which he was removed either from that of Saliſbury or Lichfield, he purſued his juvenile ſtudies under the care of Dr. Ellis, and contracted that intimacy with Sir Richard Steele, which their joint labours have ſo effectually recorded.

Of this memorable friendſhip the greater praiſe muſt be given to Steele.

It

It is not hard to love thoſe from whom nothing can be feared, and Addiſon never conſidered Steele as a rival; but Steele lived, as he confeſſes, under an habitual ſubjection to the predominating genius of Addiſon, whom he always mentioned with reverence, and treated with obſequiouſneſs.

Addiſon *, who knew his own dignity, could not always forbear to ſhew it, by playing a little upon his admirer; but he was in no danger of retort: his jeſts were endured without reſiſtance or reſentment.

But the ſneer of jocularity was not the worſt. Steele, whoſe imprudence of generoſity, or vanity of profuſion, kept him always incurably neceſſitous, upon

* Spence.

ſome preſſing exigence, in an evil hour, borrowed an hundred pounds of his friend, probably without much purpoſe of repayment; but Addiſon, who ſeems to have had other notions of a hundred pounds, grew impatient of delay, and reclaimed his loan by an execution. Steele felt with great ſenſibility the obduracy of his creditor; but with emotions of ſorrow rather than of anger.

In 1687 he was entered into Queen's College in Oxford, where, in 1689, the accidental peruſal of ſome Latin verſes gained him the patronage of Dr. Lancaſter, afterwards provoſt of Queen's College; by whoſe recommendation he was elected into Magdalen College as a Demy, a term by which that ſociety denominates

nominates thoſe which are elſewhere called Scholars; young men, who partake of the founder's benefaction, and ſucceed in their order to vacant fellowſhips*.

Here he continued to cultivate poetry and criticiſm, and grew firſt eminent by his Latin compoſitions, which are indeed entitled to particular praiſe. He has not confined himſelf to the imitation of any ancient author, but has formed his ſtile from the general language, ſuch as a diligent peruſal of the productions of different ages happened to ſupply.

His Latin compoſitions ſeem to have had much of his fondneſs; for he collected a ſecond volume of the *Muſæ Anglicanæ*, perhaps for a convenient receptacle, in which all his Latin pieces

* He took the degree of M. A. Feb. 14, 1693.

are inſerted, and where his Poem on the Peace has the firſt place. He afterwards preſented the collection to Boileau, who from that time *conceived*, ſays Tickell, *an opinion of the Engliſh genius for poetry*. Nothing is better known of Boileau than that he had an injudicious and peeviſh contempt of modern Latin, and therefore his profeſſion of regard was probably the effect of his civility rather than approbation.

Three of his Latin poems are upon ſubjects on which perhaps he would not have ventured to have written in his own language. *The Battle of the Pigmies and Cranes*; *The Barometer*; and *a Bowling-green*. When the matter is low or ſcanty, a dead language, in which nothing is mean

mean becauſe nothing is familiar, affords great conveniences; and by the ſonorous magnificence of Roman ſyllables, the writer conceals penury of thought, and want of novelty, often from the reader, and often from himſelf.

In his twenty-ſecond year he firſt ſhewed his power of Engliſh poetry, by ſome verſes addreſſed to Dryden; and ſoon afterwards publiſhed a tranſlation of the greater part of the Fourth Georgick upon Bees; after which, ſays Dryden, *my latter ſwarm is hardly worth the hiving.*

About the ſame time he compoſed the arguments prefixed to the ſeveral books of Dryden's Virgil; and produced

an Eſſay on the Georgicks, juvenile, ſuperficial, and uninſtructive, without much either of the ſcholar's learning or the critick's penetration.

His next paper of verſes contained a character of the principal Engliſh poets, inſcribed to Henry Sacheverell, who was then, if not a poet, a writer of verſes; as is ſhewn by his verſion of a ſmall part of Virgil's Georgicks, publiſhed in the Miſcellanies, and a Latin encomium on queen Mary, in the Muſæ Anglicanæ. Theſe verſes exhibit all the fondneſs of friendſhip; but, on one ſide or the other, friendſhip was too weak for the malignity of faction.

In this poem is a very confident and diſcriminative character of Spenſer, whoſe

whoſe work he had then never read *. So little ſometimes is criticiſm the effect of judgement. It is neceſſary to inform the reader, that about this time he was introduced by Congreve to Montague, then Chancellor of the Exchequer: Addiſon was then learning the trade of a courtier, and ſubjoined Montague as a poetical name to thoſe of Cowley and of Dryden.

By the influence of Mr. Montague, concurring, according to Tickell, with his natural modeſty, he was diverted from his original deſign of entering into holy orders. Montague alleged the corruption of men who engaged in civil employments without liberal education;

* Spence.

and

and declared, that, though he was repreſented as an enemy to the Church, he would never do it any injury but by withholding Addiſon from it.

Soon after (in 1695) he wrote a poem to king William, with a kind of rhyming introduction addreſſed to lord Somers. King William had no regard to elegance or literature; his ſtudy was only war; yet by a choice of miniſters, whoſe diſpoſition was very different from his own, he procured, without intention, a very liberal patronage to poetry. Addiſon was careſſed both by Somers and Montague.

In 1697, he wrote his poem on the peace of Ryſwick, which he dedicated to Montague, and which was afterwards

calld

called by Smith *the beſt Latin poem ſince the Æneid.* Praiſe muſt not be too rigorouſly examined; but the performance cannot be denied to be vigorous and elegant.

Having yet no publick employment, he obtained (in 1699) a penſion of three hundred pounds a year, that he might be enabled to travel. He ſtaid a year at Blois *, probably to learn the French language; and then proceeded in his journey to Italy, which he ſurveyed with the eyes of a poet.

While he was travelling at leiſure, he was far from being idle; for he not only collected his obſervations on the country, but found time to write his

* Spence.

Dia-

Dialogues on Medals, and four acts of Cato. Such is the relation of Tickell. Perhaps he only collected his materials, and formed his plan.

Whatever were his other employments in Italy, he there wrote the letter to lord Halifax, which is juſtly conſidered as the moſt elegant, if not the moſt ſublime, of his poetical productions. But in about two years he found it neceſſary to haſten home; being, as Swift informs us, diſtreſſed by indigence, and compelled to become the tutor of a travelling Squire.

At his return he publiſhed his Travels, with a dedication to lord Somers. As his ſtay in foreign countries was ſhort, his obſervations are ſuch as might be

be ſupplied by a haſty view, and conſiſt chiefly in compariſons of the preſent face of the country with the deſcriptions left us by the Roman poets, from whom he made preparatory collections, of which he might have ſpared the trouble, had he known that ſuch collections had been made twice before by Italian authors.

The moſt amuſing paſſage of his book is his account of the minute republick of San Marino; of many parts it is not a very ſevere cenſure to ſay that they might have been written at home. His elegance of language, and variegation of proſe and verſe, however gains upon the reader; and the book, though a while neglected, became in time ſo much the favou-

favourite of the publick, that before it was reprinted it roſe to five times its price.

When he returned to England (in 1702), with a meanneſs of appearance which gave teſtimony of the difficulties to which he had been reduced, he found his old patrons out of power, and was therefore for a time at full leiſure for the cultivation of his mind, and a mind ſo cultivated gives reaſon to believe that little time was loſt.

But he remained not long neglected or uſeleſs. The victory at Blenheim (1704) ſpread triumph and confidence over the nation; and lord Godolphin lamenting to lord Halifax that it had not been celebrated in a manner equal to

the

the ſubject, deſired him to propoſe it to ſome better poet. Halifax told him that there was no encouragement for genius; that worthleſs men were unprofitably enriched with publick money, without any care to find or employ thoſe whoſe appearance might do honour to their country. To this Godolphin replied, that ſuch abuſes ſhould in time be rectified; and that if a man could be found capable of the taſk then propoſed, he ſhould not want an ample recompenſe. Halifax then named Addiſon; but required that the Treaſurer ſhould apply to him in his own perſon. Godolphin ſent the meſſage by Mr. Boyle, afterwards lord Carlton; and Addiſon, having undertaken the work,

communicated it to the Treaſurer, while it was yet advanced no further than the ſmile of the Angel, and was immediately rewarded by ſucceeding Mr. Locke in the place of *Commiſſioner of Appeals*.

In the following year he was at Hanover with lord Halifax; and the year after was made under-ſecretary of ſtate, firſt to Sir Charles Hedges, and in a few months more to the earl of Sunderland.

About this time the prevalent taſte for Italian operas inclined him to try what would be the effect of a muſical Drama in our own language. He therefore wrote the opera of Roſamond, which, when exhibited on the ſtage, was either hiſſed or neglected; but,

truſting that the readers would do him more juſtice, he publiſhed it, with an inſcription to the dutcheſs of Marlborough; a woman without ſkill, or pretenſions to ſkill, in poetry or literature. His dedication was therefore an inſtance of ſervile abſurdity, to be exceeded only by Joſhua Barnes's dedication of a Greek Anacreon to the Duke.

His reputation had been ſomewhat advanced by the *Tender Huſband*, a comedy which Steele dedicated to him, with a confeſſion that he owed to him ſeveral of the moſt ſucceſsful ſcenes. To this play Addiſon ſupplied a prologue.

When the marquis of Wharton was appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland, Addiſon attended him as his ſecretary;

and was made keeper of the records in Birmingham's Tower, with a ſalary of three hundred pounds a year. The office was little more than nominal, and the ſalary was augmented for his accommodation.

Intereſt and faction allow little to the operation of particular diſpoſitions, or private opinions. Two men of perſonal characters more oppoſite than thoſe of Wharton and Addiſon could not eaſily be brought together. Wharton was impious, profligate, and ſhameleſs, without regard, or appearance of regard, to right and wrong: whatever is contrary to this, may be ſaid of Addiſon; but as agents of a party they were connected,

and

and how they adjusted their other sentiments we cannot know.

Addison must however not be too hastily condemned. It is not necessary to refuse benefits from a bad man, when the acceptance implies no approbation of his crimes; nor has the subordinate officer any obligation to examine the opinions or conduct of those under whom he acts, except that he may not be made the instrument of wickedness. It is reasonable to suppose that Addison counteracted, as far as he was able, the malignant and blasting influence of the Lieutenant, and that at least by his intervention some good was done, and some mischief prevented.

When he was in office, he made a law to himſelf, as Swift has recorded, never to remit his regular fees in civility to his friends: "For, ſaid he, I may "have a hundred friends; and, if my "fee be two guineas, I ſhall by relin- "quiſhing my right loſe two hundred "guineas, and no friend gain more than "two; there is therefore no proportion "between the good imparted and the "evil ſuffered."

He was in Ireland when Steele, without any communication of his deſign, began the publication of the Tatler; but he was not long concealed: by inſerting a remark on Virgil, which Addiſon had given him, he diſcovered himſelf It is indeed not eaſy for any man

to

to write upon literature, or common life, ſo as not to make himſelf known to thoſe with whom he familiarly converſes, and who are acquainted with his track of ſtudy, his favourite topicks, his peculiar notions, and his habitual phraſes.

If Steele deſired to write in ſecret, he was not lucky; a ſingle month detected him. His firſt Tatler was publiſhed April 22 (1709), and Addiſon's contribution appeared May 26. Tickell obſerves, that the Tatler began and was concluded without his concurrence. This is doubtleſs literally true; but the work did not ſuffer much by his unconſciouſneſs of its commencement, or his abſence at its ceſſation; for he continued

his assistance to December 23, and the paper stopped on January 2. He did not distinguish his pieces by any signature; and I know not whether his name was not kept secret, till the papers were collected into volumes.

To the Tatler, in about two months, succeeded the Spectator; a series of essays of the same kind, but written with less levity, upon a more regular plan, and published daily. Such an undertaking shewed the writers not to distrust their own copiousness of materials or facility of composition, and their performance justified their confidence. They found, however, in their progress, many auxiliaries. To attempt a single paper

was

was no terrifying labour: many pieces were offered, and many were received.

Addiſon had enough of the zeal of party, but Steele had at that time almoſt nothing elſe. The Spectator, in one of the firſt papers, ſhewed the political tenets of its authors; but a reſolution was ſoon taken of courting general approbation by general topicks, and ſubjects on which faction had produced no diverſity of ſentiments; ſuch as literature, morality, and familiar life. To this practice they adhered with very few deviations. The ardour of Steele once broke out in praiſe of Marlborough; and when Dr. Fleetwood prefixed to ſome ſermons a preface, overflowing with whiggiſh opinions, that it might be

be read by the Queen, it was reprinted in the Spectator.

To teach the minuter decencies and inferior duties, to regulate the practice of daily converſation, to correct thoſe depravities which are rather ridiculous than criminal, and remove thoſe grievances which, if they produce no laſting calamities, impreſs hourly vexation, was firſt attempted in Italy by *Caſa* in his book of *Manners*, and *Caſtiglione* in his *Courtier*, two books yet celebrated in Italy for purity and elegance, and which, if they are now leſs read, are neglected only becauſe they have effected that reformation which their authors intended, and their precepts now are no longer wanted. Their uſefulneſs

to

to the age in which they were written, is sufficiently attested by the translations which almost all the nations of Europe were in haste to obtain.

This species of instruction was continued, and perhaps advanced, by the French; among whom *La Bruyere's* Manners of the Age, though, as Boileau remarked, it is written without connection, certainly deserves great praise, for liveliness of description and justness of observation.

Before the Tatler and Spectator, if the writers for the theatre are excepted, England had no masters of common life. No writers had yet undertaken to reform either the savageness of neglect, or the impertinence of civility; to teach

when

when to ſpeak, or to be ſilent; how to refuſe, or how to comply. We wanted not books to teach us our more important duties, and to ſettle opinions in philoſophy or politicks; but an *Arbiter elegantiarum*, a judge of propriety, was yet wanting, who ſhould ſurvey the track of daily converſation, and free it from thorns and prickles, which teaze the paſſer, though they do not wound him.

For this purpoſe nothing is ſo proper as the frequent publication of ſhort papers, which we read not as ſtudy but amuſement. If the ſubject be ſlight, the treatiſe likewiſe is ſhort. The buſy may find time, and the idle may find patience.

This

This mode of conveying cheap and eaſy knowledge began among us in the Civil War, when it was much the intereſt of either party to raiſe and fix the prejudices of the people. At that time appeared Mercurius Aulicus, Mercurius Ruſticus, and Mercurius Civicus. It is ſaid that when any title grew popular, it was ſtolen by the antagoniſt, who by this ſtratagem conveyed his notions to thoſe who would not have received him had he not worn the appearance of a friend. The tumult of thoſe unhappy days left ſcarcely any man leiſure to treaſure up occaſional compoſitions; and ſo much were they neglected, that a complete collection is no where to be found.

Theſe

These Mercuries were succeeded by L'Estrange's Observator, and that by Lesley's Rehearsal, and perhaps by others; but hitherto nothing had been conveyed to the people, in this commodious manner, but controversy relating to the Church or State; of which they taught many to talk, whom they could not teach to judge.

It has been suggested that the Royal Society was instituted soon after the Restoration, to divert the attention of the people from public discontent. The Tatler and Spectator had the same tendency: they were published at a time when two parties, loud, restless, and violent, each with plausible declarations, and each perhaps without any distinct termi-

termination of its views, were agitating the nation; to minds heated with political conteſt, they ſupplied cooler and more inoffenſive reflections; and it is ſaid by Addiſon, in a ſubſequent work, that they had a perceptible influence upon the converſation of that time, and taught the frolick and the gay to unite merriment with decency; an effect ſuch they can never wholly loſe, while they continue to be among the firſt books by which both ſexes are initiated in the elegancies of knowledge.

The Tatler and Spectator reduced, like Caſa, the unſettled practice of daily intercourſe to propriety and politeneſs; and, like La Bruyere, exhibited the *Characters and Manners of the Age.*

The

The perſonages introduced in theſe papers were not merely ideal; they were then known, and conſpicuous in various ſtations. Of the Tatler this is told by Steele in his laſt paper, and of the Spectator by Budgell in the Preface to Theophraſtus; a book which Addiſon has recommended, and which he was ſuſpected to have reviſed, if he did not write it. Of thoſe portraits, which may be ſuppoſed to be ſometimes embelliſhed, and ſometimes aggravated, the originals are partly known, and partly forgotten.

But to ſay that they united the plans of two or three eminent writers, is to give them but a ſmall part of their due praiſe; they ſuperadded literature and criticiſm, and ſometimes towered far above

above their predeceſſors, and taught, with great juſtneſs of argument and dignity of language, the moſt important duties and ſublime truths.

All theſe topicks were happily varied with elegant fictions and refined allegories, and illuminated with different changes of ſtile and felicities of invention.

It is recorded by Budgell, that of the characters feigned or exhibited in the Spectator, the favourite of Addiſon was Sir Roger de Coverley, of whom he had formed a very delicate and diſcriminated idea, which he would not ſuffer to be violated; and therefore when Steele had ſhewn him innocently picking up a girl in the Temple, and taking her to a

tavern, he drew upon himself so much of his friend's indignation, that he was forced to appease him by a promise of forbearing Sir Roger for the time to come.

The reason which induced Cervantes to bring his hero to the grave, *para mi sola nacio Don Quixote, y yo para el*, made Addison declare, with an undue vehemence of expression, that he would kill Sir Roger; being of opinion that they were born for one another, and that any other hand would do him wrong.

It may be doubted whether Addison ever filled up his original delineation. He describes his Knight as having his imagination somewhat warped; but of this perversion he has made very little use.

uſe. The irregularities in Sir Roger's conduct, ſeem not ſo much the effects of a mind deviating from the beaten track of life, by the perpetual preſſure of ſome overwhelming idea, as of habitual ruſticity, and that negligence which ſolitary grandeur naturally generates.

The variable weather of the mind, the flying vapours of incipient madneſs, which from time to time cloud reaſon, without eclipſing it, it requires ſo much nicety to exhibit, that Addiſon ſeems to have been deterred from proſecuting his own deſign.

To Sir Roger, who, as a country gentleman, appears to be a Tory, or, as it is gently expreſſed, an adherent to the landed intereſt, is oppoſed Sir Andrew

Freeport, a new man, a wealthy merchant, zealous for the moneyed intereſt, and a Whig. Of this contrariety of opinions, it is probable more conſequences were at firſt intended than could be produced, when the reſolution was taken to exclude party from the paper. Sir Andrew does but little, and that little ſeems not to have pleaſed Addiſon, who, when he diſmiſſed him from the club, changed his opinions. Steele had made him, in the true ſpirit of unfeeling commerce, declare that he *would not build an hoſpital for idle people*; but at laſt he buys land, ſettles in the country, and builds not a manufactory, but an hoſpital for twelve old huſbandmen, for men with whom a merchant has little

little acquaintance, and whom he commonly conſiders with little kindneſs.

Of eſſays thus elegant, thus inſtructive, and thus commodiouſly diſtributed, it is natural to ſuppoſe the approbation general and the ſale numerous. I once heard it obſerved, that the ſale may be calculated by the product of the tax, related in the laſt number to produce more than twenty pounds a week, and therefore ſtated at one and twenty pounds, or three pounds ten ſhillings a day: this, at a half-penny a paper, will give ſixteen hundred and eighty for the daily number.

This ſale is not great; yet this, if Swift be credited, was likely to grow leſs; for he declares that the Spectator,

whom he ridicules for his endleſs mention of the *fair ſex*, had before his receſs wearied his readers.

The next year (1713), in which Cato came upon the ſtage, was the grand climacterick of Addiſon's reputation. Upon the death of Cato, he had, as is ſaid, planned a tragedy in the time of his travels, and had for ſeveral years the four firſt acts finiſhed, which were ſhewn to ſuch as were likely to ſpread their admiration. They were ſeen by Pope, and by Cibber; who relates that Steele, when he took back the copy, told him, in the deſpicable cant of literary modeſty, that, whatever ſpirit his friend had ſhewn in the compoſition, he doubted whether he would have courage ſufficient to expoſe

poſe it to the cenſure of a Britiſh audience.

The time however was now come when thoſe who affected to think liberty in danger, affected likewiſe to think that a ſtage-play might preſerve it: and Addiſon was importuned, in the name of the tutelary deities of Britain, to ſhew his courage and his zeal by finiſhing his deſign.

To reſume his work he ſeemed perverſely and unaccountably unwilling; and by a requeſt, which perhaps he wiſhed to be denied, deſired Mr. Hughes to add a fifth act. Hughes ſuppoſed him ſerious; and, undertaking the ſupplement, brought in a few days ſome ſcenes for his examination; but he had in the

mean time gone to work himſelf, and produced half an act, which he afterwards completed, but with brevity irregularly diſproportionate to the foregoing parts; like a taſk performed with reluctance, and hurried to its concluſion.

It may yet be doubted whether Cato was made publick by any change of the author's purpoſe; for Dennis charged him with raiſing prejudices in his own favour by falſe poſitions of preparatory criticiſm, and with *poiſoning the town* by contradicting in the Spectator the eſtabliſhed rule of poetical juſtice, becauſe his own hero, with all his virtues, was to fall before a tyrant. The fact is certain; the motives we muſt gueſs.

Addi-

Addiſon was, I believe, ſufficiently diſpoſed to bar all avenues againſt all danger. When Pope brought him the prologue, which is properly accommodated to the play, there were theſe words, *Britons, ariſe, be worth like this approved*; meaning nothing more than, Britons erect and exalt yourſelves to the approbation of publick virtue. Addiſon was frighted leſt he ſhould be thought a promoter of inſurrection, and the line was liquidated to *Britons, attend.*

Now, *heavily in clouds, came on the day, the great, the important day,* when Addiſon was to ſtand the hazard of the theatre. That there might, however, be left as little to hazard as was poſſible, on the laſt night Steele, as himſelf relates, undertook

dertook to pack an audience. This, ſays Pope *, had been tried for the firſt time in favour of the Diſtreſt Mother; and was now, with more efficacy, practiſed for Cato.

The danger was ſoon over. The whole nation was at that time on fire with faction. The Whigs applauded every line in which Liberty was mentioned, as a ſatire on the Tories; and the Tories echoed every clap, to ſhew that the ſatire was unfelt. The ſtory of Bolingbroke is well known. He called Booth to his box, and gave him fifty guineas for defending the cauſe of Liberty ſo well againſt a perpetual dictator. The Whigs, ſays Pope, deſign a ſecond

* Spence.

preſent,

preſent, when they can accompany it with as good a ſentence.

The play, ſupported thus by the emulation of factious praiſe, was acted night after night for a longer time than, I believe, the publick had allowed to any drama before; and the author, as Mrs. Porter related, wandered through the whole exhibition behind the ſcenes with reſtleſs and unappeaſable ſolicitude.

When it was printed, notice was given that the Queen would be pleaſed if it was dedicated to her; *but as he had deſigned that compliment elſewhere, he found himſelf obliged*, ſays Tickell, *by his duty on the one hand, and his honour on the other, to ſend it into the world without any dedication.*

Human happineſs has always its abatements; the bright-ſt ſun-ſhine of ſucceſs is not without a cloud. No ſooner was Cato offered to the reader than it was attacked by the acute malignity of Dennis, with all the violence of angry criticiſm. Dennis, though equally zealous, and probably by his temper more furious than Addiſon, for what they called liberty, and, though a flatterer of the Whig miniſtry, could not ſit quiet at a ſucceſsful play; but was eager to tell friends and enemies, that they had miſplaced their admirations. The world was too ſtubborn for inſtruction; with the fate of the cenſurer of Corneille's Cid, his animadverſions ſhewed his anger

without effect, and Cato continued to be praiſed.

Pope had now an opportunity of courting the friendſhip of Addiſon, by vilifying his old enemy, and could give reſentment its full play without appearing to revenge himſelf. He therefore publiſhed a *Narrative of the Madneſs of John Dennis*; a performance which left the objections to the play in their full force, and therefore diſcovered more deſire of vexing the critick than of defending the poet.

Addiſon, who was no ſtranger to the world, probably ſaw the ſelfiſhneſs of Pope's friendſhip; and, reſolving that he ſhould have the conſequences of his officiouſneſs to himſelf, informed Dennis by

by Steele, that he was ſorry for the inſult; and that whenever he ſhould think fit to anſwer his remarks, he would do it in a manner to which nothing could be objected.

The greateſt weakneſs of the play is in the ſcenes of love, which are ſaid by Pope * to have been added to the original plan upon a ſubſequent review, in compliance with the popular practice of the ſtage. Such an authority it is hard to reject; yet the Love is ſo intimately mingled with the whole action, that it cannot eaſily be thought extrinſick and adventitious; for if it were taken away, what would be left? or how were the four acts filled in the firſt draught?

* Spence.

At

At the publication the wits ſeemed proud to pay their attendance with encomiaſtick verſes. The beſt are from an unknown hand, which will perhaps loſe ſomewhat of their praiſe when the author is known to be Jeffreys.

Cato had yet other honours. It was cenſured as a party-play by a *Scholar of Oxford*, and defended in a favourable examination by Dr. Sewel. It was tranſlated by Salvini into Italian, and acted at Florence; and by the Jeſuits of St. Omer's into Latin, and played by their pupils. Of this verſion a copy was ſent to Mr. Addiſon: it is to be wiſhed that it could be found, for the ſake of comparing their verſion of the ſoliloquy with that of Bland.

A tragedy was written on the ſame ſubject by Des Champs, a French poet, which was tranſlated, with a criticiſm on the Engliſh play. But the tranſlator and the critick are now forgotten.

Dennis lived on unanſwered, and therefore little read: Addiſon knew the policy of literature too well to make his enemy important, by drawing the attention of the publick upon a criticiſm, which, though ſometimes intemperate, was often irrefragable.

While Cato was upon the ſtage, another daily paper called the *Guardian* was publiſhed by Steele. To this Addiſon gave great aſſiſtance, whether occaſionally or by previous engagement is not known.

The character of Guardian was too narrow and too ſerious: it might properly enough admit both the duties and the decencies of life, but ſeemed not to include literary ſpeculations, and was in ſome degree violated by merriment and burleſque. What had the Guardian of the Lizards to do with clubs of tall or of little men, with neſts of ants, or with Strada's proluſions?

Of this paper nothing is neceſſary to be ſaid, but that it found many contributors, and that it was a continuation of the Spectator, with the ſame elegance, and the ſame variety, till ſome unlucky ſparkle from a Tory paper ſet Steele's politicks on fire, and wit at once blazed into faction. He was ſoon

too hot for neutral topicks, and quitted the *Guardian* to write the *Engliſhman*.

The papers of Addiſon are marked in the Spectator by one of the letters in the name of *Clio*, and in the Guardian by *a hand*; whether it was, as Tickell pretends to think, that he was unwilling to uſurp the praiſe of others, or as Steele with far greater likelihood inſinuates, that he could not without diſcontent impart to others any of his own. I have heard that his avidity did not ſatisfy itſelf with the air of renown, but that with great eagerneſs he laid hold on his proportion of the profits.

Many of theſe papers were written with powers truly comick, with nice diſcrimination of characters, and accurate

rate obſervation of natural or accidental deviations from propriety; but it was not ſuppoſed that he had tried a comedy on the ſtage, till Steele, after his death, declared him the author of the *Drummer*; this however he did not know to be true by any cogent teſtimony; for when Addiſon put the play into his hands, he only told him it was the work of a *Gentleman in the Company*; and when it was received, as is confeſſed, with cold diſapprobation, he was probably leſs willing to claim it. Tickell omitted it in his collection; but the teſtimony of Steele, and the total ſilence of any other claimant, has determined the publick to aſſign it to Addiſon, and it is now printed with his other poetry.

Steele carried the *Drummer* to the play-houſe, and afterwards to the preſs, and ſold the copy for fifty guineas.

To the opinion of Steele may be added the proof ſupplied by the play itſelf, of which the characters are ſuch as Addiſon would have delineated, and the tendency ſuch as Addiſon would have promoted. That it ſhould have been ill received would raiſe wonder, did we not daily ſee the capricious diſtribution of theatrical praiſe.

He was not all this time an indifferent ſpectator of publick affairs. He wrote, as different exigences required (in 1707), *The preſent State of the War, and the Neceſſity of an Augmentation*; which, however judicious, being written

on

on temporary topicks, and exhibiting no peculiar powers, has naturally ſunk by its own weight into neglect. This cannot be ſaid of the few papers entitled *The Whig Examiner*, in which is exhibited all the force of gay malevolence and humorous ſatire. Of this paper, which juſt appeared and expired, Swift remarks, with exultation, that *it is now down among the dead men.* He might well rejoice at the death of that which he could not have killed. Every reader of every party, ſince perſonal malice is paſt, and the papers which once inflamed the nation are read only as effuſions of wit, muſt wiſh for more of the *Whig Examiners*; for on no occaſion was the genius of Addiſon more vigo-

rouſly exerted, and on none did the ſuperiority of his wit more evidently appear. His *Trial of Count Tariff*, written to expoſe the Treaty of Commerce with France, lived no longer than the queſtion that produced it.

Not long afterwards an attempt was made to revive the *Spectator*, at a time indeed by no means favourable to literature, when the ſucceſſion of a new family to the throne filled the nation with anxiety, diſcord, and confuſion; and either the turbulence of the times or the ſatiety of the readers put a ſtop to the publication, after an experiment of eighty numbers, which were afterwards collected into an eighth volume, perhaps more valuable than any one of thoſe that went

went before it: Addiſon produced more than a fourth part, and the other contributors are by no means unworthy of appearing as his aſſociates. The time that had paſſed during the ſuſpenſion of the *Spectator*, though it had not leſſened his power of humour, ſeems to have increaſed his diſpoſition to ſerioufneſs: the proportion of his religious to his comick papers is greater than in the former ſeries.

The *Spectator*, from its recommencement, was publiſhed only three times a week, and no diſcriminative marks were added to the papers. To Addiſon Tickell has aſcribed twenty-three *.

* Numb. 556. 557. 558. 559. 561. 562. 565. 567. 568. 569. 571. 574. 575. 579. 580. 582. 583. 584. 585. 590. 592. 598. 600.

The *Spectator* had many contributors; and Steele, whoſe negligence kept him always in a hurry, when it was his turn to furniſh a paper, called loudly for the Letters, of which Addiſon, whoſe materials were more, made little uſe; having recourſe to ſketches and hints, the product of his former ſtudies, which he now reviewed and completed: among theſe are named by Tickell the *Eſſays* on *Wit*, thoſe on the *Pleaſures* of the *Imagination*, and the *Criticiſm* on *Milton*.

When the Houſe of Hanover took poſſeſſion of the throne, it was reaſonable to expect that the zeal of Addiſon would be ſuitably rewarded. Before the arrival of king George he was made ſecretary to the regency, and was required

by his office to ſend notice to Hanover that the Queen was dead, and that the throne was vacant. To do this would not have been difficult to any man but Addiſon, who was ſo overwhelmed with the greatneſs of the event, and ſo diſtracted by choice of expreſſion, that the lords, who could not wait for the niceties of criticiſm, called Mr. Southwell, a clerk in the houſe, and ordered him to diſpatch the meſſage. Southwell readily told what was neceſſary, in the common ſtile of buſineſs, and valued himſelf upon having done what was too hard for Addiſon.

He was better qualified for the *Freeholder*, a paper which he publiſhed twice a week, from Dec. 23, 1715, to the middle

middle of the next year. This was undertaken in defence of the eſtabliſhed government, ſometimes with argument, ſometimes with mirth. In argument he had many equals; but his humour was ſingular and matchleſs. Bigotry itſelf muſt be delighted with the Tory Fox-hunter.

There are however ſome ſtrokes leſs elegant, and leſs decent; ſuch as the Pretender's Journal, in which one topick of ridicule is his poverty. This mode of abuſe had been employed by Milton againſt king Charles II.

— — Jacobæi
Centum exulantis viſcera Marſupii regis.

And

And Oldmixon delights to tell of ſome alderman of London, that he had more money than the exiled princes; but that which might be expected from Milton's ſavageneſs, or Oldmixon's meanneſs, was not ſuitable to the delicacy of Addiſon.

Steele thought the humour of the *Freeholder* too nice and gentle for ſuch noiſy times; and is reported to have ſaid that the miniſtry made uſe of a lute, when they ſhould have called for a trumpet.

This year * he married the counteſs dowager of Warwick, whom he had ſolicited by a very long and anxious courtſhip, perhaps with behaviour not very

* Auguſt 2, 1716.

unlike

unlike that of Sir Roger to his disdainful widow; and who, I am afraid, diverted herself often by playing with his passion. He is said to have first known her by becoming tutor to her son †. "He formed," said Tonson, "the design of getting that lady, from the "time when he was first recommended "into the family." In what part of his life he obtained the recommendation, or how long, and in what manner he lived in the family, I know not. His advances at first were certainly timorous, but grew bolder as his reputation and influence increased; till at last the lady was persuaded to marry him, on terms much like those on which a

† Spence.

Turkish

Turkiſh princeſs is eſpouſed, to whom the Sultan is reported to pronounce, "Daughter, I give thee this man for "thy ſlave." The marriage, if uncontradicted report can be credited, made no addition to his happineſs; it neither found them nor made them equal. She always remembered her own rank, and thought herſelf entitled to treat with very little ceremony the tutor of her ſon. Rowe's ballad of the *Deſpairing Shepherd* is ſaid to have been written, either before or after marriage, upon this memorable pair; and it is certain that Addiſon has left behind him no encouragement for ambitious love.

The year after (1717), he roſe to his higheſt elevation, being made ſecretary of

of ſtate. For this employment he might be juſtly ſuppoſed qualified by long practice of buſineſs, and by his regular aſcent through other offices; but expectation is often diſappointed; it is univerſally confeſſed that he was unequal to the duties of his place. In the houſe of commons he could not ſpeak, and therefore was uſeleſs to the defence of the government. In the office, ſays Pope*, he could not iſſue an order without loſing his time in queſt of fine expreſſions. What he gained in rank, he loſt in credit; and, finding by experience his own inability, was forced to ſolicit his diſmiſſion, with a penſion of fifteen hundred pounds a year. His

* Spence.

friends palliated this relinquiſhment, of which both friends and enemies knew the true reaſon, with an account of declining health, and the neceſſity of receſs and quiet.

He now returned to his vocation, and began to plan literary occupations for his future life. He purpoſed a tragedy on the death of Socrates; a ſtory of which, as Tickell remarks, the baſis is narrow, and to which I know not how love could have been appended. There would however have been no want either of virtue in the ſentiments, or elegance in the language.

He engaged in a nobler work, a defence of the *Chriſtian Religion*, of which part was publiſhed after his death; and he

he deſigned to have made a new poetical verſion of the Pſalms.

Theſe pious compoſitions Pope imputed * to a ſelfiſh motive, upon the credit, as he owns, of Tonſon; who having quarrelled with Addiſon, and not loving him, ſaid, that, when he laid down the ſecretary's office, he intended to take orders, and obtain a biſhoprick; *for*, ſaid he, *I always thought him a prieſt in his heart.*

That Pope ſhould have thought this conjecture of Tonſon worth remembrance is a proof, but indeed ſo far as I have found, the only proof, that he retained ſome malignity from their ancient rivalry. Tonſon pretended but to

* Spence.

gueſs

gueſs it; no other mortal ever ſuſpected it; and Pope might have reflected, that a man who had been ſecretary of ſtate, in the miniſtry of Sunderland, knew a nearer way to a biſhoprick than by defending Religion, or tranſlating the Pſalms.

It is related that he had once a deſign to make an Engliſh Dictionary, and that he conſidered Dr. Tillotſon as the writer of higheſt authority. There was formerly ſent to me by Mr. Locker, clerk of the Leatherſellers Company, who was eminent for curioſity and literature, a collection of examples ſelected from Tillotſon's works, as Locker ſaid, by Addiſon. It came too late to be of uſe, ſo I inſpected it but

 ſlight-

ſlightly, and remember it indiſtinctly. I thought the paſſages too ſhort.

Addiſon however did not conclude his life in peaceful ſtudies; but relapſed, when he was near his end, to a political queſtion.

It ſo happened that (1718-19) a controverſy was agitated, with great vehemence, between thoſe friends of long continuance, Addiſon and Steele. It may be aſked, in the language of Homer, what power or what cauſe could ſet them at variance. The ſubject of their diſpute was of great importance. The earl of Sunderland propoſed an act called the *Peerage Bill*, by which the number of peers ſhould be fixed, and the king reſtrained from any new creation of nobi-

nobility, unleſs when an old family ſhould be extinct. To this the lords would naturally agree; and the king, who was yet little acquainted with his own prerogative, and, as is now well known, almoſt indifferent to the poſſeſſions of the Crown, had been perſuaded to conſent. The only difficulty was found among the commons, who were not likely to approve the perpetual excluſion of themſelves and their poſterity. The bill therefore was eagerly oppoſed, and among others by Sir Robert Walpole, whoſe ſpeech was publiſhed.

The lords might think their dignity diminiſhed by improper advancements, and particularly by the introduction of twelve new peers at once, to produce a

majority of Tories in the laſt reign; an act of authority violent enough, yet certainly legal, and by no means to be compared with that contempt of national right, with which ſome time afterwards, by the inſtigation of Whiggiſm, the commons, choſen by the people for three years, choſe themſelves for ſeven. But, whatever might be the diſpoſition of the lords, the people had no wiſh to increaſe their power. The tendency of the bill, as Steele obſerved in a letter to the earl of Oxford, was to introduce an Ariſtocracy, for a majority in the houſe of lords, ſo limited, would have been deſpotick and irreſiſtible.

To prevent this ſubverſion of the ancient eſtabliſhment, Steele, whoſe pen

readily ſeconded his political paſſions, endeavoured to alarm the nation by a pamphlet called the *Plebeian*; to this an anſwer was publiſhed by Addiſon under the title of the *Old Whig*, in which it is not diſcovered that Steele was then known to be the advocate for the commons. Steele replied by a ſecond *Plebeian*; and, whether by ignorance or by courteſy, confined himſelf to his queſtion, without any perſonal notice of his opponent. Nothing hitherto was committed againſt the laws of friendſhip, or proprieties of decency; but controvertiſts cannot long retain their kindneſs for each other. The *Old Whig* anſwered the *Plebeian*, and could not forbear ſome contempt of little *Dicky*, whoſe trade it

was to write pamphlets. Dicky however did not loſe his ſettled veneration for his friend; but contented himſelf with quoting ſome lines of Cato, which were at once detection and reproof. The bill was laid aſide during that ſeſſion, and Addiſon died before the next, in which its commitment was rejected by two hundred ſixty-five to one hundred ſeventy-ſeven.

Every reader ſurely muſt regret that theſe two illuſtrious friends, after ſo many years paſt in confidence and endearment, in unity of intereſt, conformity of opinion, and fellowſhip of ſtudy, ſhould finally part in acrimonious oppoſition. Such a controverſy was *Bellum pluſquam civile*, as Lucan expreſſes it.

Why

Why could not faction find other advocates? But, among the uncertainties of the human ſtate, we are doomed to number the inſtability of friendſhip.

Of this diſpute I have little knowledge but from the *Biographia Britannica*. The *Old Whig* is not inſerted in Addiſon's works, nor is it mentioned by Tickell in his Life; why it was omitted the biographers doubtleſs give the true reaſon; the fact was too recent, and thoſe who had been heated in the contention were not yet cool.

The neceſſity of complying with times, and of ſparing perſons, is the great impediment of biography. Hiſtory may be formed from permanent monuments and records; but Lives can only be

written from perſonal knowledge, which is growing every day leſs, and in a ſhort time is loſt for ever. What is known can ſeldom be immediately told; and when it might be told, it is no longer known. The delicate features of the mind, the nice diſcriminations of character, and the minute peculiarities of conduct, are ſoon obliterated, and it is ſurely better that caprice, obſtinacy, frolick, and folly, however they might delight in the deſcription, ſhould be ſilently forgotten, than that, by wanton merriment and unſeaſonable detection, a pang ſhould be given to a widow, a daughter, a brother, or a friend. As the proceſs of theſe narratives is now bringing me among my contemporaries, I begin

to

to feel myſelf *walking upon aſhes under which the fire is not extinguiſhed*, and coming to the time of which it will be proper rather to ſay *nothing that is falſe, than all that is true.*

The end of this uſeful life was now approaching.—Addiſon had for ſome time been oppreſſed by ſhortneſs of breath, which was now aggravated by a dropſy; and, finding his danger preſſing, he prepared to die conformably to his own precepts and profeſſions.

During this lingering decay, he ſent, as Pope relates *, a meſſage by the earl of Warwick to Mr. Gay, deſiring to ſee him: Gay, who had not viſited him for ſome time before, obeyed the ſummons,

* Spence.

and

and found himſelf received with great kindneſs. The purpoſe for which the interview had been ſolicited was then diſcovered: Addiſon told him, that he had injured him; but that, if he recovered, he would recompenſe him. What the injury was he did not explain, nor did Gay ever know; but ſuppoſed that ſome preferment deſigned for him had by Addiſon's intervention been withheld.

Lord Warwick was a young man of very irregular life, and perhaps of looſe opinions. Addiſon, for whom he did not want reſpect, had very diligently endeavoured to reclaim him; but his arguments and expoſtulations had no effect: one experiment, however, remained

mained to be tried. When he found his life near its end, he directed the young lord to be called; and when he desired, with great tenderness, to hear his last injunctions, told him, *I have sent for you that you may see how a Christian can die*. What effect this awful scene had on the earl I know not; he died himself in a short time.

In Tickell's excellent Elegy on his friend are these lines:

He taught us how to live; and, Oh! too high
The price of knowledge, taught us how to die.

In which he alludes to this moving interview, as he told Dr. Young, to whom he related it.

Having

Having given directions to Mr. Tickell for the publication of his works, and dedicated them on his death-bed to his friend Mr. Craggs, he died June 17, 1719, at Holland-houſe, leaving no child but a daughter.

Of his virtue it is a ſufficient teſtimony, that the reſentment of party has tranſmitted no charge of any crime. He was not one of thoſe who are praiſed only after death; for his merit was ſo ſo generally acknowledged, that Swift, having obſerved that his election paſſed without a conteſt, adds, that if he had propoſed himſelf for king he would hardly have been refuſed.

His zeal for his party did not extinguiſh his kindneſs for the merit of his oppo-

opponents: when he was ſecretary in Ireland, he refuſed to intermit his acquaintance with Swift.

Of his habits, or external manners, nothing is ſo often mentioned as that timorous or ſullen taciturnity, which his friends called modeſty by too mild a name. Steele mentions with great tenderneſs, "that remarkable baſhfulneſs, "which is a cloak that hides and muffles "merit;" and tells us, that "his abili-"ties were covered only by modeſty, "which doubles the beauties which are "ſeen, and gives credit and eſteem to "all that are concealed." Cheſterfield affirms, that "Addiſon was the moſt "timorous and aukward man that he "ever ſaw." And Addiſon, ſpeaking of his

his own deficience in converſation, uſed to ſay of himſelf, that, with reſpect to intellectual wealth, "he could draw bills "for a thouſand pounds, though he had "not a guinea in his pocket."

That he wanted current coin for ready payment, and by that want was often obſtructed and diſtreſſed; that he was oppreſſed by an improper and ungraceful timidity, every teſtimony concurs to prove; but Cheſterfield's repreſentation is doubtleſs hyperbolical. That man cannot be ſuppoſed very unexpert in the arts of converſation and practice of life, who, without fortune or alliance, by his uſefulneſs and dexterity, became ſecretary of ſtate; and who died at forty-ſeven, after having not

only

only ſtood long in the higheſt rank of wit and literature, but filled one of the moſt important offices of ſtate.

The time in which he lived had reaſon to lament his obſtinacy of ſilence; "for he was," ſays Steele, "above all "men in that talent called humour, "and enjoyed it in ſuch perfection, that "I have often reflected, after a night "ſpent with him apart from all the "world, that I had had the pleaſure of "converſing with an intimate acquain-"tance of Terence and Catullus, who "had all their wit and nature, heigh-"tened with humour more exquiſite "and delightful than any other man "ever poſſeſſed." This is the fondneſs of a friend; let us hear what is told us by

by a rival. "Addiſon's converſation *, ſays Pope, "had ſomething in it more "charming than I have found in any "other man. But this was only when "familiar: before ſtrangers, or perhaps "a ſingle ſtranger, he preſerved his "dignity by a ſtiff ſilence."

This modeſty was by no means inconſiſtent with a very high opinion of his own merit. He demanded to be the firſt name in modern wit; and, with Steele to echo him, uſed to depreciate Dryden, whom Pope and Congreve defended againſt them †. There is no reaſon to doubt that he ſuffered too much pain from the prevalence of Pope's poetical reputation; nor is it

* Spence. † Tonſon and Spence.

with-

without ſtrong reaſon ſuſpected that by ſome diſingenuous acts he endeavoured to obſtruct it: Pope was not the only man whom he inſidiouſly injured, though the only man of whom he could be afraid.

His own powers were ſuch as might have ſatisfied him with conſcious excellence. Of very extenſive learning he has indeed given no proofs. He ſeems to have had ſmall acquaintance with the ſciences, and to have read little except Latin and French; but of the Latin poets his *Dialogues on Medals* ſhew that he had peruſed the works with great diligence and ſkill. The abundance of his own mind left him little need of adventitious ſentiments; his wit always could ſuggeſt what the occaſion de-

manded. He had read with critical eyes the important volume of human life, and knew the heart of man from the depths of ſtratagem to the ſurface of affectation.

What he knew he could eaſily communicate. "This," ſays Steele, "was "particular in this writer, that, when "he had taken his reſolution, or made "his plan for what he deſigned to "write, he would walk about a room, "and dictate it into language with as "much freedom and eaſe as any one "could write it down, and attend to "the coherence and grammar of what "he dictated."

Pope,

Pope *, who can be leſs ſuſpected of favouring his memory, declares that he wrote very fluently, but was ſlow and ſcrupulous in correcting; that many of his Spectators were written very faſt, and ſent immediately to the preſs; and that it ſeemed to be for his advantage not to have time for much reviſal.

"He would alter," ſays Pope, "any "thing to pleaſe his friends, before "publication; but would not retouch "his pieces afterwards: and I believe, "not one word in Cato, to which I "made an objection, was ſuffered to "ſtand."

The laſt line of Cato is Pope's, having been originally written

* Spence.

And, Oh! 'twas this that ended Cato's life.

Pope might have made more objections to the ſix concluding lines. In the firſt couplet the words *from hence* are improper; and the ſecond line is taken from Dryden's Virgil. Of the next couplet, the firſt verſe being included in the ſecond, is therefore uſeleſs; and in the third *Diſcord* is made to produce *Strife*.

Of the courſe of Addiſon's familiar day*, before his marriage, Pope has given a detail. He had in the houſe with him Budgell, and perhaps Philips. His chief companions were Steele, Budgell, Philips, Carey, Davenant, and colonel Brett. With one or other of theſe he al-

* Spence.

ways

ways breakfaſted. He ſtudied all morning; then dined at a tavern, and went afterwards to Button's.

Button had been a ſervant in the counteſs of Warwick's family, who, under the patronage of Addiſon, kept a coffee-houſe on the ſouth-ſide of Ruſſel-ſtreet, about two doors from Covent-garden. Here it was that the wits of that time uſed to aſſemble. It is ſaid, that when Addiſon had ſuffered any vexation from the counteſs, he withdrew the company from Button's houſe.

From the coffee-houſe he went again to a tavern, where he often ſat late, and drank too much wine. In the bottle, diſcontent ſeeks for comfort, cowardice for courage, and baſhfulneſs

for confidence. It is not unlikely that Addiſon was firſt ſeduced to exceſs by the manumiſſion which he obtained from the ſervile timidity of his ſober hours. He that feels oppreſſion from the preſence of thoſe to whom he knows himſelf ſuperior, will deſire to ſet looſe his powers of converſation; and who, that ever aſked ſuccour from Bacchus, was able to preſerve himſelf from being enſlaved by his auxiliary?

Among thoſe friends it was that Addiſon diſplayed the elegance of his colloquial accompliſhments, which may eaſily be ſuppoſed ſuch as Pope repreſents them. The remark of Mandeville, who, when he had paſſed an evening in his company, declared that

he was a parſon in a tye-wig, can detract little from his character; he was always reſerved to ſtrangers, and was not incited to uncommon freedom by a character like that of Mandeville.

From any minute knowledge of his familiar manners, the intervention of ſixty years has now debarred us. Steele once promiſed Congreve and the publick a complete deſcription of his character; but the promiſes of authors are like the vows of lovers. Steele thought no more on his deſign, or thought on it with anxiety that at laſt diſguſted him, and left his friend in the hands of Tickell.

His works will ſupply ſome information. It appears from his various pic-

tures of the world, that, with all his bashfulness, he had conversed with many distinct classes of men, had surveyed their ways with very diligent observation, and marked with great acuteness the effects of different modes of life. He was a man in whose presence nothing reprehensible was out of danger; quick in discerning whatever was wrong or ridiculous, and not unwilling to expose it. *There are*, says Steele, *in his writings many oblique strokes upon some of the wittiest men of the age.* His delight was more to excite merriment than detestation, and he detects follies rather than crimes.

If any judgement be made, from his books, of his moral character, nothing will

will be found but purity and excellence. Knowledge of mankind indeed, leſs extenſive than that of Addiſon, will ſhew that to write and to live are very different. Many who praiſe virtue, do no more than praiſe it. Yet it is reaſonable to believe that Addiſon's profeſſions and practice were at no great variance, ſince, amidſt that ſtorm of faction in which moſt of his life was paſſed, though his ſtation made him conſpicuous, and his activity made him formidable, the character given him by his friends was never contradicted by his enemies: of thoſe with whom intereſt or opinion united him, he had not only the eſteem but the kindneſs; and of others, whom the violence of oppoſition drove againſt him,

him, though he might loſe the love, he retained the reverence.

It is juſtly obſerved by Tickell, that he employed wit on the ſide of virtue and religion. He not only made the proper uſe of wit himſelf, but taught it to others; and from his time it has been generally ſubſervient to the cauſe of reaſon and of truth. He has diſſipated the prejudice that had long connected gaiety with vice, and eaſineſs of manners with laxity of principles. He has reſtored virtue to its dignity, and taught innocence not to be aſhamed. This is an elevation of literary character, *above all Greek, above all Roman fame*. No greater felicity can genius attain than that of having purified intellectual plea-

ſure,

ſure, ſeparated mirth from indecency, and wit from licentiouſneſs; of having taught a ſucceſſion of writers to bring elegance and gaiety to the aid of goodneſs; and, if I may uſe expreſſions yet more awful, of having *turned many to righteouſneſs*.

ADDISON, in his life, and for ſome time afterwards, was conſidered by the greater part of readers as ſupremely excelling both in poetry and criticiſm. Part of his reputation may be probably aſcribed to the advancement of his fortune; when, as Swift obſerves, he became

came a ſtateſman, and ſaw poets waiting at his levee, it is no wonder that praiſe was accumulated upon him. Much likewiſe may be more honourably aſcribed to his perſonal character; he who, if he had claimed it, might have obtained the diadem, was not likely to be denied the laurel.

But time quickly puts an end to artificial and accidental fame, and Addiſon is to paſs through futurity protected only by his genius. Every name which kindneſs or intereſt once raiſed too high, is in danger, leſt the next age ſhould, by the vengeance of criticiſm, ſink it in the ſame proportion. A great writer has lately ſtiled him *an indifferent poet, and a worſe critick.*

His

His poetry is firſt to be conſidered; of which it muſt be confeſſed that it has not often thoſe felicities of diction which give luſtre to ſentiments, or that vigour of ſentiment that animates diction: there is little of ardour, vehemence, or tranſport; there is very rarely the awfulneſs of grandeur, and not very often the ſplendour of elegance. He thinks juſtly; but he thinks faintly. This is his general character, to which doubtleſs many ſingle paſſages will furniſh exceptions.

Yet if he ſeldom reaches ſupreme excellence, he rarely ſinks into dulneſs, and is ſtill more rarely entangled in abſurdity. He did not truſt his powers enough to be negligent. There is in moſt

moſt of his compoſitions a calmneſs and equability, deliberate and cautious, ſometimes with little that delights, but ſeldom with any thing that offends.

Of this kind ſeem to be his poems to Dryden, to Somers, and to the King. His ode on St. Cecilia has been imitated by Pope, and has ſomething in it of Dryden's vigour. Of his Account of the Engliſh Poets, he uſed to ſpeak as a *poor thing* *; but it is not worſe than his uſual ſtrain. He has ſaid, not very judiciouſly, in his character of Waller:

Thy verſe could ſhew ev'n Cromwell's innocence,
And compliment the ſtorms that bore him hence.

* Spence.

O!

O! had thy Muſe not come an age
too ſoon,
But ſeen great Naſſau on the Britiſh
throne,
How had his triumph glitter'd in thy
page.—

What is this but to ſay that he who could compliment Cromwell had been the proper poet for king William? Addiſon however never printed the piece.

The Letter from Italy has been always praiſed, but has never been praiſed beyond its merit. It is more correct, with leſs appearance of labour, and more elegant, with leſs ambition of ornament, than any other of his poems. There is however one broken metaphor, of which notice may properly be taken:

Fir'd with that name—
I bridle in my ſtruggling Muſe with pain,
That longs to launch into a nobler ſtrain.

To *bridle* a *goddeſs* is no very delicate idea; but why muſt ſhe be *bridled?* becauſe ſhe *longs to launch*; an act which was never hindered by a *bridle*: and whither will ſhe *launch?* into a *nobler ſtrain*. She is in the firſt line a *horſe*, in the ſecond a *boat*; and the care of the poet is to keep his *horſe* or his *boat* from *ſinging*.

The next compoſition is the far-famed Campaign, which Dr. Warton has termed a *Gazette in Rhyme*, with harſhneſs not often uſed by the good-nature of his criticiſm. Before a cen-

ſure ſo ſevere is admitted, let us conſider that War is a frequent ſubject of Poetry, and then enquire who has deſcribed it with more juſtneſs and force. Many of our own writers tried their powers upon this year of victory, yet Addiſon's is confeſſedly the beſt performance; his poem is the work of a man not blinded by the duſt of learning: his images are not borrowed merely from books. The ſuperiority which he confers upon his hero is not perſonal proweſs, and *mighty bone*, but deliberate intrepidity, a calm command of his paſſions, and the power of conſulting his own mind in the midſt of danger. The rejection and contempt of fiction is rational and manly.

It may be obſerved that the laſt line is imitated by Pope;

Marlb'rough's exploits appear divinely bright—
Rais'd of themſelves, their genuine charms they boaſt,
And thoſe that paint them trueſt, praiſe them moſt.

This Pope had in his thoughts, but not knowing how to uſe what was not his own, he ſpoiled the thought when he had borrowed it:

The well-ſung woes ſhall ſoothe my ghoſt;
He beſt can paint them who ſhall feel them moſt.

Martial exploits may be *painted*; perhaps *woes* may be *painted*; but they are ſurely not *painted* by being *well-ſung*: it

is

is not eaſy to paint in ſong, or to ſing in colours.

No paſſage in the Campaign has been more often mentioned than the ſimile of the Angel, which is ſaid in the Tatler to be *one of the nobleſt thoughts that ever entered into the heart of man*, and is therefore worthy of attentive conſideration. Let it be firſt enquired whether it be at laſt a ſimile. A poetical ſimile is the diſcovery of likeneſs between two actions, in their general nature diſſimilar, or of cauſes terminating by different operations in ſome reſemblance of effect. But the mention of another like conſequence from a like cauſe, or of a like performance by a like agency, is not a ſimile, but an exempli-

fication. It is not a ſimile to ſay that the Thames waters fields, as the Po waters fields; or that as Hecla vomits flames in Iceland, ſo Ætna vomits flames in Sicily. When Horace ſays of Pindar, that he pours his violence and rapidity of verſe, as a river ſwoln with rain ruſhes from the mountain; or of himſelf, that his genius wanders in queſt of poetical decorations, as the bee wanders to collect honey, he, in either caſe, produces a ſimile; the mind is impreſſed with the reſemblance of things generally unlike, as unlike as intellect and body. But if Pindar had been deſcribed as writing with the copiouſneſs and grandeur of Homer, or Horace had told that he reviewed and finiſhed his own poetry with

with the ſame care as Iſocrates poliſhed his orations, inſtead of ſimilitude he would have exhibited almoſt identity; he would have given the ſame portraits with different names. In this poem, when the Engliſh are repreſented as gaining a fortified paſs, by repetition of attack and perſeverance of reſolution; their obſtinacy of courage, and vigour of onſet, is well illuſtrated by the ſea that breaks, with inceſſant battery, the dikes of Holland. This is a ſimile; but when Addiſon, having celebrated the beauty of Marlborough's perſon, tells us that *Achilles thus was form'd with every grace*, here is no ſimile, but a mere exemplification. A ſimile may be compared to lines converging at a point, and is more-

excellent as the lines approach from greater diſtance: an exemplification may be conſidered as two parallel lines which run on together without approximation, never far ſeparated, and never joined.

Marlborough is ſo like the angel in the poem, that the action of both is almoſt the ſame, and performed by both in the ſame manner. Marlborough *teaches the battle to rage*; the angel *directs the ſtorm*: Marlborough is *unmoved in peaceful thought*; the angel is *calm and ſerene*: Marlborough ſtands *unmoved amidſt the ſhock of hoſts*; the angel rides *calm in the whirlwind*. The lines on Marlborough are juſt and noble; but the ſimile gives almoſt the ſame images a ſecond time.

But perhaps this thought, though hardly a ſimile, was remote from vulgar conceptions, and required great labour of reſearch, or dexterity of application. Of this, Dr. Madden, a name which Ireland ought to honour, once gave me his opinion. *If I had ſet*, ſaid he, *ten ſchool-boys to write on the battle of* Blenheim, *and eight had brought me the Angel, I ſhould not have been ſurpriſed.*

The opera of Roſamond, though it is ſeldom mentioned, is one of the firſt of Addiſon's compoſitions. The ſubject is well-choſen, the fiction is pleaſing, and the praiſe of Marborough, for which the ſcene gives an opportunity, is, what perhaps every human excellence muſt be, the product of good-luck improved by

genius. The thoughts are ſometimes great, and ſometimes tender; the verſification is eaſy and gay. There is doubtleſs ſome advantage in the ſhortneſs of the lines, which there is little temptation to load with expletive epithets. The dialogue ſeems commonly better than the ſongs. The two comick characters of Sir Truſty and Grideline, though of no great value, are yet ſuch as the poet intended. Sir Truſty's account of the death of Roſamond is, I think, too groſly abſurd. The whole drama is airy and elegant; engaging in its proceſs, and pleaſing in its concluſion. If Addiſon had cultivated the lighter parts of poetry, he would probably have excelled.

The tragedy of Cato, which, contrarily to the rule obſerved in ſelecting the works of other poets, has by the weight of its character forced its way into this collection, is unqueſtionably the nobleſt production of Addiſon's genius. Of a work ſo much read, it is difficult to ſay any thing new. About things on which the publick thinks long, it commonly attains to think right; and of Cato it has been not unjuſtly determined, that it is rather a poem in dialogue than a drama, rather a ſucceſſion of juſt ſentiments in elegant language than a repreſentation of natural affections, or of any ſtate probable or poſſible in human life. Nothing here *excites or aſſwages emotion*; here is *no magical power of raiſing phan-*

taſtick

taſtick terror or wild anxiety. The events are expected without ſolicitude, and are remembered without joy or ſorrow. Of the agents we have no care: we conſider not what they are doing, or what they are ſuffering; we wiſh only to know what they have to ſay. Cato is a being above our ſolicitude; a man of whom the gods take care, and whom we leave to their care with heedleſs confidence. To the reſt neither gods nor men can have much attention; for there is not one amongſt them that ſtrongly attracts either affection or eſteem. But they are made the vehicles of ſuch ſentiments and ſuch expreſſion, that there is ſcarcely a ſcene in the play which the reader does

does not wiſh to impreſs upon his memory.

When Cato was ſhewn to Pope *, he adviſed the author to print it, without any theatrical exhibition, ſuppoſing that it would be read more favourably than heard. Addiſon declared himſelf of the ſame opinion; but urged the importunity of his friends for its appearance on the ſtage. The emulation of parties made it ſucceſsful beyond expectation, and its ſucceſs has introduced or confirmed among us the uſe of dialogue too declamatory, of unaffecting elegance, and chill philoſophy.

The univerſality of applauſe, however it might quell the cenſure of common

* Spence.

mor-

mortals, had no other effect than to harden Dennis in fixed diſlike; but his diſlike was not merely capricious. He found and ſhewed many faults: he ſhewed them indeed with anger, but he found them with acuteneſs, ſuch as ought to reſcue his criticiſm from oblivion; though, at laſt, it will have no other life than it derives from the work which it endeavours to oppreſs.

Why he pays no regard to the opinion of the audience, he gives his reaſon, by remarking, that

"A deference is to be paid to a ge-
"neral applauſe, when it appears that
"that applauſe is natural and ſponta-
"neous; but that little regard is to be
"had to it, when it is affected and arti-
"ficial.

"ficial. Of all the tragedies which in
"his memory have had vaſt and vio-
"lent runs, not one has been excellent,
"few have been tolerable, moſt have
"been ſcandalous. When a poet writes
"a tragedy, who knows he has judge-
"ment, and who feels he has genius,
"that poet preſumes upon his own
"merit, and ſcorns to make a cabal.
"That people come coolly to the re-
"preſentation of ſuch a tragedy, with-
"out any violent expectation, or delu-
"ſive imagination, or invincible pre-
"poſſeſſion; that ſuch an audience is
"liable to receive the impreſſions which
"the poem ſhall naturally make in
"them, and to judge by their own rea-
"ſon and their own judgements, and
"that

" that reaſon and judgement are calm
" and ſerene, not formed by nature to
" make proſelytes, and to controul and
" lord it over the imaginations of others.
" But that when an author writes a
" tragedy, who knows he has neither
" genius nor judgement, he has re-
" courſe to the making a party, and
" endeavours to make up in induſtry
" what is wanting in talent, and to ſup-
" ply by poetical craft the abſence of
" poetical art: that ſuch an author is
" humbly contented to raiſe men's paſ-
" ſions by a plot without doors, ſince
" he deſpairs of doing it by that which
" he brings upon the ſtage. That party
" and paſſion, and prepoſſeſſion, are
" clamorous and tumultuous things,

" and

"and so much the more clamorous and "tumultuous by how much the more "erroneous: that they domineer and "tyrannize over the imaginations of "persons who want judgement, and "sometimes too of those who have it; "and, like a fierce outrageous torrent, "bear down all opposition before them."

He then condemns the neglect of poetical justice; which is always one of his favourite principles.

"'Tis certainly the duty of every "tragick poet, by the exact distribu-"tion of poetical justice, to imitate the "Divine Dispensation, and to inculcate "a particular Providence. 'Tis true, "indeed, upon the stage of the world, "the

"the wicked ſometimes proſper, and "the guiltleſs ſuffer. But that is per- "mitted by the Governor of the world, "to ſhew, from the attribute of his in- "finite juſtice, that there is a compen- "ſation in futurity, to prove the im- "mortality of the human ſoul, and the "certainty of future rewards and pu- "niſhments. But the poetical perſons "in tragedy exiſt no longer than the "reading, or the repreſentation; the "whole extent of their entity is cir- "cumſcribed by thoſe; and therefore, "during that reading or repreſentation, "according to their merits or demerits, "they muſt be puniſhed or rewarded. "If this is not done, there is no im- "partial diſtribution of poetical juſtice,

"no

"no inſtructive lecture of a particular "Providence, and no imitation of the "Divine Diſpenſation. And yet the "author of this tragedy does not only "run counter to this, in the fate of his "principal character; but every where, "throughout it, makes virtue ſuffer and "vice triumph: for not only Cato is "vanquiſhed by Cæſar, but the treache-"ry and perfidiouſneſs of Syphax pre-"vails over the honeſt ſimplicity and "the credulity of Juba; and the ſly "ſubtlety and diſſimulation of Portius "over the generous frankneſs and open-"heartedneſs of Marcus."

Whatever pleaſure there may be in ſeeing crimes puniſhed and virtue rewarded, yet, ſince wickedneſs often pro-

ſpers in real life, the poet is certainly at liberty to give it proſperity on the ſtage. For if poetry has an imitation of reality, how are its laws broken by exhibiting the world in its true form? The ſtage may ſometimes gratify our wiſhes; but, if it be truly the *mirror of life*, it ought to ſhew us ſometimes what we are to expect.

Dennis objects to the characters that they are not natural, or reaſonable; but as heroes and heroines are not beings that are ſeen every day, it is hard to find upon what principles their conduct ſhall be tried. It is, however, not uſeleſs to conſider what he ſays of the manner in which Cato receives the account of his ſon's death.

"Nor is the grief of Cato, in the "fourth act, one jot more in nature "than that of his ſon and Lucia in the "third. Cato receives the news of his "ſon's death not only with dry eyes, "but with a ſort of ſatisfaction; and "in the ſame page ſheds tears for the "calamity of his country, and does "the ſame thing in the next page upon "the bare apprehenſion of the danger "of his friends. Now, ſince the love "of one's country is the love of one's "countrymen, as I have ſhewn upon "another occaſion, I deſire to aſk theſe "queſtions: of all our countrymen, "which do we love moſt, thoſe whom "we know, or thoſe whom we know "not? And of thoſe whom we know,

" which do we cheriſh moſt, our friends
" or our enemies? And of our friends,
" which are the deareſt to us, thoſe who
" are related to us, or thoſe who are
" not? And of all our relations, for
" which have we moſt tenderneſs, for
" thoſe who are near to us, or for thoſe
" who are remote? And of our near re-
" lations, which are the neareſt, and con-
" ſequently the deareſt to us, our off-
" ſpring or others? Our offspring, moſt
" certainly; as Nature, or in other words
" Providence, has wiſely contrived for
" the preſervation of mankind. Now,
" does it not follow, from what has been
" ſaid, that for a man to receive the
" news of his ſon's death with dry eyes,
" and to weep at the ſame time for the

" cala-

"calamities of his country, is a wretched "affectation, and a miſerable inconſiſ- "tency? Is not that, in plain Engliſh, "to receive with dry eyes the news of "the deaths of thoſe for whoſe ſake "our country is a name ſo dear to us, "and at the ſame time to ſhed tears for "thoſe for whoſe ſakes our country is "not a name ſo dear to us?"

But this formidable aſſailant is leaſt reſiſtible when he attacks the probability of the action, and the reaſonableneſs of the plan. Every critical reader muſt remark, that Addiſon has, with a ſcrupuloſity almoſt unexampled on the Engliſh ſtage, confined himſelf in time to a ſingle day, and in place to rigorous unity. The ſcene never changes, and

the whole action of the play paſſes in the great hall of Cato's houſe at Utica. Much therefore is done in the hall, for which any other place had been more fit; and this impropriety affords Dennis many hints of merriment, and opportunities of triumph. The paſſage is long; but as ſuch diſquiſitions are not common, and the objections are ſkilfully formed and vigorouſly urged, thoſe who delight in critical controverſy will not think it tedious.

"Upon the departure of Portius, "Sempronius makes but one ſoliloquy, "and immediately in comes Syphax, "and then the two politicians are at it "immediately. They lay their heads "together, with their ſnuff-boxes in "their

"their hands, as Mr. Bays has it, and
"league it away. But in the midſt of
"that wiſe ſcene, Syphax ſeems to give
"a ſeaſonable caution to Sempronius:

"*Syph.* But is it true, Sempronius,
"that your ſenate
"Is call'd together? Gods! thou muſt
"be cautious,
"Cato has piercing eyes.

"There is a great deal of caution ſhewn
"indeed, in meeting in a governor's
"own hall to carry on their plot againſt
"him. Whatever opinion they have of
"his eyes, I ſuppoſe they had none of
"his ears, or they would never have
"talked at this fooliſh rate ſo near:

—"Gods! thou muſt be cautious.

"Oh! yes, very cautious: for if Cato "ſhould overhear you, and turn you off "for politicians, Cæſar would never "take you; no, Cæſar would never take "you.

"When Cato, Act II. turns the ſena- "tors out of the hall, upon pretence of "acquainting Juba with the reſult of "their debates, he appears to me to do "a thing which is neither reaſonable "nor civil. Juba might certainly have "better been made acquainted with the "reſult of that debate in ſome private "apartment of the palace. But the "poet was driven upon this abſurdity "to make way for another; and that is, "to give Juba an opportunity to de- "mand Marcia of her father. But the

"quar-

"quarrel and rage of Juba and Syphax,
"in the ſame Act, the invectives of Sy-
"phax againſt the Romans and Cato;
"the advice that he gives Juba, in her
"father's hall, to bear away Marcia by
"force; and his brutal and clamorous
"rage upon his refuſal, and at a time
"when Cato was ſcarce out of ſight,
"and perhaps not out of hearing; at
"leaſt, ſome of his guards or domeſ-
"ticks muſt neceſſarily be ſuppoſed to
"be within hearing; is a thing that is
"ſo far from being probable, that it is
"hardly poſſible.

"Sempronius, in the ſecond Act,
"comes back once more in the ſame
"morning to the governor's hall, to
"carry on the conſpiracy with Syphax
"againſt

" againſt the governor, his country, and
" his family: which is ſo ſtupid, that it
" is below the wiſdom of the O—'s,
" the Mac's, and the Teague's; even
" Euſtace Commins himſelf would ne-
" ver have gone to Juſtice-hall, to have
" conſpired againſt the government. If
" officers at Portſmouth ſhould lay their
" heads together, in order to the carry-
" ing off J— G—'s niece or daughter,
" would they meet in J— G—'s hall,
" to carry on that conſpiracy? There
" would be no neceſſity for their meet-
" ing there, at leaſt till they came to
" the execution of their plot, becauſe
" there would be other places to meet
" in. There would be no probability
" that they ſhould meet there, becauſe

" there

"there would be places more private "and more commodious. Now there "ought to be nothing in a tragical "action but what is neceſſary or pro-"bable.

"But treaſon is not the only thing "that is carried on in this hall: that "and love, and philoſophy, take their "turns in it, without any manner of "neceſſity or probability, occaſioned by "the action, as duly and as regularly, "without interrupting one another, as "if there were a triple league between "them, and a mutual agreement that "each ſhould give place to and make "way for the other, in a due and or-"derly ſucceſſion.

"We

"We come now to the third Act. "Sempronius, in this Act, comes into "the governor's hall, with the leaders "of the mutiny: but as ſoon as Cato is "gone, Sempronius, who but juſt be- "fore had acted like an unparalleled "knave, diſcovers himſelf, like an egre- "gious fool, to be an accomplice in the "conſpiracy.

"*Semp.* Know, villains, when ſuch
"paltry ſlaves preſume
"To mix in treaſon, if the plot ſucceeds,
"They're thrown neglected by; but if
"it fails,
"They're ſure to die like dogs, as you
"ſhall do.
"Here, take theſe factious monſters,
"drag them forth

"To

" To ſudden death.—

" 'Tis true, indeed, the ſecond leader
" ſays, there are none there but friends:
" but is that poſſible at ſuch a juncture?
" Can a parcel of rogues attempt to
" aſſaſſinate the governor of a town of
" war, in his own houſe, in mid-day,
" and after they are diſcovered and de-
" feated? Can there be none near them
" but friends? Is it not plain from theſe
" words of Sempronius,

" Here, take theſe factious monſters,
" drag them forth
" To ſudden death.—

" and from the entrance of the guards
" upon the word of command, that
" thoſe guards were within ear-ſhot?

" Behold

" Behold Sempronius then palpably dis-
" covered. How comes it to paſs, then,
" that, inſtead of being hanged up with
" the reſt, he remains ſecure in the go-
" vernor's hall, and there carries on his
" conſpiracy againſt the government, the
" third time in the ſame day, with his
" old comrade Syphax? who enters at
" the ſame time that the guards are
" carrying away the leaders, big with
" the news of the defeat of Sempronius;
" though where he had his intelligence
" ſo ſoon is difficult to imagine. And
" now the reader may expect a very ex-
" traordinary ſcene: there is not abun-
" dance of ſpirit indeed, nor a great
" deal of paſſion, but there is wiſdom
" more than enough to ſupply all defects.

" *Syph.*

" *Syph.* Our first design, my friend,
" has prov'd abortive;
" Still there remains an after-game to
" play:
" My troops are mounted, their Numi-
" dian steeds
" Snuff up the winds, and long to scour
" the desart:
" Let but Sempronius lead us in our
" flight,
" We'll force the gate, where Marcus
" keeps his guard,
" And hew down all that would oppose
" our passage;
" A day will bring us into Cæsar's camp.
" *Semp.* Confusion! I have fail'd of
" half my purpose;
" Marcia, the charming Marcia's left
" behind. " Well!

"Well! but though he tells us the "half-purpose that he has failed of, he "does not tell us the half that he has "carried. But what does he mean by

"Marcia, the charming Marcia's left
"behind?

"He is now in her own house; and we "have neither seen her nor heard of her "any where else since the play began. "But now let us hear Syphax:

"What hinders then, but that thou
"find her out,
"And hurry her away by manly force?

"But what does old Syphax mean by "finding her out? They talk as if she "were as hard to be found as a hare in "a frosty morning.

"*Semp.*

" *Semp.* But how to gain admiſſion?

" Oh! ſhe is found out then, it ſeems.

" But how to gain admiſſion? for
" acceſs
" Is giv'n to none, but Juba and her
" brothers.

" But, raillery apart, why acceſs to Juba?
" For he was owned and received as a
" lover neither by the father nor by the
" daughter. Well! but let that paſs.
" Syphax puts Sempronius out of pain
" immediately; and, being a Numidian,
" abounding in wiles, ſupplies him with
" a ſtratagem for admiſſion, that, I
" believe, is a non-pareille:

" *Syph.* Thou ſhalt have Juba's dreſs,
" and Juba's guards;

" The doors will open, when Numidia's
" prince
" Seems to appear before them.

" Sempronius is, it ſeems, to paſs for
" Juba in full day at Cato's houſe, where
" they were both ſo very well known, by
" having Juba's dreſs and his guards:
" as if one of the marſhals of France
" could paſs for the duke of Bavaria,
" at noon-day, at Verſailles, by having
" his dreſs and liveries. But how does
" Syphax pretend to help Sempronius
" to young Juba's dreſs? Does he ſerve
" him in a double capacity, as general
" and maſter of his wardrobe? But why
" Juba's guards? For the devil of any
" guards has Juba appeared with yet.
" Well! though this is a mighty poli-

"tick invention, yet, methinks, they "might have done without it: for, ſince "the advice that Syphax gave to Sem-"pronius was,

"To hurry her away by manly force, "in my opinion, the ſhorteſt and like-"lieſt way of coming at the lady was "by demoliſhing, inſtead of putting on "an impertinent diſguiſe to circumvent "two or three ſlaves. But Sempronius, "it ſeems, is of another opinion. He "extols to the ſkies the invention of "old Syphax:

"*Sempr.* Heavens! what a thought "was there!

"Now I appeal to the reader, if I have "not been as good as my word. Did I

" not tell him, that I would lay before
" him a very wiſe ſcene?

" But now let us lay before the
" reader that part of the ſcenery of the
" Fourth Act, which may ſhew the ab-
" ſurdities which the author has run
" into, through the indiſcreet obſer-
" vance of the Unity of Place. I do not
" remember that Ariſtotle has ſaid any
" thing expreſly concerning the Unity
" of Place. 'Tis true, implicitly he has
" ſaid enough in the rules which he has
" laid down for the Chorus. For, by
" making the Chorus an eſſential part
" of Tragedy, and by bringing it on the
" ſtage immediately after the opening
" of the ſcene, and retaining it there
" till the very cataſtrophe, he has ſo de-

"termined and fixed the place of ac-
"tion, that it was impoſſible for an au-
"thor on the Grecian ſtage to break
"through that unity. I am of opinion
"that if a modern tragic poet can pre-
"ſerve the unity of place, without de-
"ſtroying the probability of the inci-
"dents, 'tis always beſt for him to do
"it, becauſe by the preſervation of that
"unity, as we have taken notice above,
"he adds grace, and cleanneſs, and
"comelineſs, to the repreſentation. But
"ſince there are no expreſs rules about
"it, and we are under no compulſion
"to keep it, ſince we have no Chorus
"as the Grecian poet had; if it cannot
"be preſerved, without rendering the
"greater part of the incidents unrea-

" ſonable and abſurd, and perhaps ſome-
" times monſtrous, 'tis certainly better
" to break it.

" Now comes bully Sempronius, co-
" mically accoutred and equipped with
" his Numidian dreſs and his Numidian
" guards. Let the reader attend to him
" with all his ears; for the words of the
" wiſe are precious:

" *Sempr.* The deer is lodg'd, I've
" track'd her to her covert.

" Now I would fain know why this
" deer is ſaid to be lodged, ſince we
" have not heard one word, ſince the
" play began, of her being at all out of
" harbour: and if we conſider the diſ-
" courſe with which ſhe and Lucia begin

" the

" the Act, we have reaſon to believe that
" they had hardly been talking of ſuch
" matters in the ſtreet. However, to
" pleaſure Sempronius, let us ſuppoſe,
" for once, that the deer is lodged:

" The deer is lodg'd, I've track'd her to
" her covert.

" If he had ſeen her in the open field,
" what occaſion had he to track her,
" when he had ſo many Numidian dogs
" at his heels, which, with one halloo,
" he might have ſet upon her haunches?
" If he did not ſee her in the open field,
" how could he poſſibly track her? If
" he had ſeen her in the ſtreet, why did
" he not ſet upon her in the ſtreet, ſince
" through the ſtreet ſhe muſt be carried

" at laſt? Now here, inſtead of having
" his thoughts upon his buſineſs, and
" upon the preſent danger; inſtead of
" meditating and contriving how he ſhall
" paſs with his miſtreſs through the
" ſouthern gate, where her brother Mar-
" cus is upon the guard, and where ſhe
" would certainly prove an impediment
" to him, which is the Roman word for
" the *baggage*; inſtead of doing this,
" Sempronius is entertaining himſelf
" with whimſies:

" *Sempr.* How will the young Numi-
" dian rave to ſee
" His miſtreſs loſt? If aught could glad
" my ſoul,
" Beyond th' enjoyment of ſo bright a
" prize,
" 'Twould

" 'Twould be to torture that young gay
" Barbarian.
" But hark! what noiſe? Death to my
" hopes, 'tis he,
" 'Tis Juba's ſelf! There is but one way
" left!
" He muſt be murder'd, and a paſſage
" cut
" Thro' thoſe his guards.

" Pray, what are *thoſe his guards?* I " thought at preſent, that Juba's guards " had been Sempronius's tools, and had " been dangling after his heels.

" But now let us ſum up all theſe ab- " ſurdities together. Sempronius goes " at noon-day, in Juba's clothes, and " with Juba's guards, to Cato's palace, " in order to paſs for Juba, in a place

" where

" where they were both ſo very well
" known: he meets Juba there, and re-
" ſolves to murder him with his own
" guards. Upon the guards appearing
" a little baſhful, he threatens them:

" Ha! Daſtards, do you tremble!
" Or act like men, or by yon azure
" heav'n!

" But the guards ſtill remaining reſtive,
" Sempronius himſelf attacks Juba, while
" each of the guards is repreſenting Mr.
" Spectator's ſign of the Gaper, awed,
" it ſeems, and terrified by Sempronius's
" threats. Juba kills Sempronius, and
" takes his own army priſoners, and
" carries them in triumph away to Cato.
" Now I would fain know, if any part
" of

"of Mr. Bays's tragedy is ſo full of ab-
"ſurdity as this?

"Upon hearing the claſh of ſwords,
"Lucia and Marcia come in. The
"queſtion is, why no men come in
"upon hearing the noiſe of ſwords in
"the governor's hall? Where was the
"governor himſelf? Where were his
"guards? Where were his ſervants?
"Such an attempt as this, ſo near the
"perſon of a governor of a place of war,
"was enough to alarm the whole gar-
"riſon: and yet, for almoſt half an
"hour after Sempronius was killed, we
"find none of thoſe appear, who were
"the likelieſt in the world to be alarm'd;
"and the noiſe of ſwords is made to
"draw only two poor women thither,

"who

" who were moſt certain to run away
" from it. Upon Lucia and Marcia's
" coming in, Lucia appears in all the
" ſymptoms of an hyſterical gentlewo-
" man:

" *Luc.* Sure 'twas the claſh of ſwords!
" my troubled heart
" Is ſo caſt down, and ſunk amidſt its
" ſorrows,
" It throbs with fear, and akes at every
" ſound!

" And immediately her old whimſy re-
" turns upon her:

" O Marcia, ſhould thy brothers, for
" my ſake—
" I die away with horror at the thought.

" She

" She fancies that there can be no cut-
" ting-of-throats, but it muſt be for her.
" If this is tragical, I would fain know
" what is comical. Well! upon this
" they ſpy the body of Sempronius; and
" Marcia, deluded by the habit, it
" ſeems, takes him for Juba; for, ſays
" ſhe,

" The face is muffled up within the
" garment.

" Now how a man could fight, and fall
" with his face muffled up in his gar-
" ment, is, I think, a little hard to con-
" ceive! Beſides, Juba, before he killed
" him, knew him to be Sempronius. It
" was not by his garment that he knew
" this; it was by his face then: his face
" therefore was not muffled. Upon ſee-
" ing

"ing this man with the muffled face,
"Marcia falls a-raving; and, owning
"her paſſion for the ſuppoſed defunct,
"begins to make his funeral oration.
"Upon which Juba enters liſtening, I
"ſuppoſe on tiptoe: for I cannot ima-
"gine how any one can enter, liſtening,
"in any other poſture. I would fain
"know how it came to paſs, that during
"all this time he had ſent nobody, no
"not ſo much as a candle-ſnuffer, to
"take away the dead body of Sempro-
"nius. Well! but let us regard him
"liſtening. Having left his apprehen-
"ſion behind him, he, at firſt, applies
"what Marcia ſays to Sempronius. But
"finding at laſt, with much ado, that
"he himſelf is the happy man, he quits

"his

" his eve-dropping, and diſcovers him-
" ſelf juſt time enough to prevent his
" being cuckolded by a dead man, of
" whom the moment before he had ap-
" peared ſo jealous; and greedily inter-
" cepts the bliſs, which was fondly de-
" ſigned for one who could not be the
" better for it. But here I muſt aſk a
" queſtion: how comes Juba to liſten
" here, who had not liſtened before
" throughout the play? Or, how comes
" he to be the only perſon of this tra-
" gedy who liſtens, when love and trea-
" ſon were ſo often talked in ſo public
" a place as a hall? I am afraid the au-
" thor was driven upon all theſe abſur-
" dities only to introduce this miſerable
" miſtake of Marcia; which, after all,

" is

" is much below the dignity of tragedy,
" as any thing is which is the effect or
" result of trick.

" But let us come to the scenery of the
" Fifth Act. Cato appears first upon the
" scene, sitting in a thoughtful posture;
" in his hand Plato's treatise on the Im-
" mortality of the Soul, a drawn sword
" on the table by him. Now let us con-
" sider the place in which this sight is
" presented to us. The place, forsooth,
" is a long hall. Let us suppose, that
" any one should place himself in this
" posture, in the midst of one of our
" halls in London; that he should ap-
" pear *solus*, in a sullen posture, a drawn
" sword on the table by him; in his
" hand Plato's treatise on the Immorta-

" lity

"lity of the Soul, tranſlated lately by
"Bernard Lintot: I deſire the reader to
"conſider, whether ſuch a perſon as
"this would paſs with them, who be-
"held him for a great patriot, a great
"philoſopher, or a general, or for ſome
"whimſical perſon who fancied himſelf
"all theſe; and whether the people,
"who belonged to the family, would
"think that ſuch a perſon had a deſign
"upon their midrifs or his own?

"In ſhort, that Cato ſhould ſit long
"enough, in the aforeſaid poſture, in
"the midſt of this large hall, to read
"over Plato's treatiſe on the Immorta-
"lity of the Soul, which is a lecture of
"two long hours; that he ſhould pro-
"poſe to himſelf to be private there

" upon that occaſion; that he ſhould be
" angry with his ſon for intruding there;
" then, that he ſhould leave this hall
" upon the pretence of ſleep, give him-
" ſelf the mortal wound in his bed-
" chamber, and then be brought back
" into that hall to expire, purely to ſhew
" his good-breeding, and ſave his friends
" the trouble of coming up to his bed-
" chamber; all this appears to me to be
" improbable, incredible, impoſſible."

Such is the cenſure of Dennis. There is, as Dryden expreſſes it, perhaps *too much horſe-play in his raillery*; but if his jeſts are coarſe, his arguments are ſtrong. Yet as we love better to be pleaſed than to be taught, Cato is read, and the critick is neglected.

Fluſhed

Fluſhed with conſciouſneſs of theſe detections of abſurdity in the conduct, he afterwards attacked the ſentiments of Cato; but he then amuſed himſelf with petty cavils, and minute objections.

Of Addiſon's ſmaller poems, no particular mention is neceſſary; they have little that can employ or require a critick. The parallel of the Princes and Gods, in his verſes to Kneller, is often happy, but is too well known to be quoted.

His tranſlations, ſo far as I have compared them, want the exactneſs of a ſcholar. That he underſtood his authors cannot be doubted; but his verſions will not teach others to underſtand them, being too licentiouſly paraphraſtical.

They are however, for the moſt part, ſmooth and eaſy; and, what is the firſt excellence of a tranſlator, ſuch as may be read with pleaſure by thoſe who do not know the originals.

His poetry is poliſhed and pure; the product of a mind too judicious to commit faults, but not ſufficiently vigorous to attain excellence. He has ſometimes a ſtriking line, or a ſhining paragraph; but in the whole he is warm rather than fervid, and ſhews more dexterity than ſtrength. He was however one of our earlieſt examples of correctneſs.

The verſification which he had learned from Dryden, he debaſed rather than refined. His rhymes are often diſſonant; in his Georgick he admits broken lines.

He uſes both triplets and alexandrines, but triplets more frequently in his tranſlations than his other works. The mere ſtructure of verſes ſeems never to have engaged much of his care. But his lines are very ſmooth in Roſamond, and too ſmooth in Cato.

Addiſon is now to be conſidered as a critick; a name which the preſent generation is ſcarcely willing to allow him. His criticiſm is condemned as tentative or experimental, rather than ſcientifick, and he is conſidered as deciding by taſte rather than by principles.

It is not uncommon for thoſe who have grown wiſe by the labour of others to add a little of their own, and overlook their maſters. Addiſon is now deſpiſed

by ſome who perhaps would never have ſeen his defects, but by the lights which he afforded them. That he always wrote as he would think it neceſſary to write now, cannot be affirmed; his inſtructions were ſuch as the character of his readers made proper. That general knowledge which now circulates in common talk was in his time rarely to be found. Men not profeſſing learning were not aſhamed of ignorance; and in the female world any acquaintance with books was diſtinguiſhed only to be cenſured. His purpoſe was to infuſe literary curioſity, by gentle and unſuſpected conveyance, into the gay, the idle, and the wealthy; he therefore preſented knowledge in the moſt alluring form, not

lofty and auſtere, but acceſſible and familiar. When he ſhewed them their defects, he ſhewed them likewiſe that they might be eaſily ſupplied. His attempt ſucceeded; enquiry was awakened, and comprehenſion expanded. An emulation of intellectual elegance was excited, and from his time to our own life has been gradually exalted, and converſation purified and enlarged.

Dryden had, not many years before, ſcattered criticiſm over his Prefaces with very little parſimony; but, though he ſometimes condeſcended to be ſomewhat familiar, his manner was in general too ſcholaſtick for thoſe who had yet their rudiments to learn, and found it not eaſy to underſtand their maſter. His

obſervations were framed rather for thoſe that were learning to write, than for thoſe that read only to talk.

An inſtructor like Addiſon was now wanting, whoſe remarks being ſuperficial, might be eaſily underſtood, and being juſt, might prepare the mind for more attainments. Had he preſented *Paradiſe Loſt* to the publick with all the pomp of ſyſtem and ſeverity of ſcience, he would perhaps have been admired, and the book ſtill have been neglected; but by the blandiſhments of gentleneſs and facility, he has made Milton an univerſal favourite, with whom readers of every claſs think it neceſſary to be pleaſed.

He

He deſcended now and then to lower diſquiſitions, and by a ſerious diſplay of the beauties of *Chevy Chaſe* expoſed himſelf to the ridicule of Wagſtaff, who beſtowed a like pompous character on *Tom Thumb*; and to the contempt of Dennis, who, conſidering the fundamental poſition of his criticiſm, that *Chevy Chaſe* pleaſes, and ought to pleaſe, becauſe it is natural, obſerves, "that there is a way of deviating from nature, by bombaſt or tumour, which ſoars above nature, and enlarges images beyond their real bulk; by affectation, which forſakes nature in queſt of ſomething unſuitable; and by imbecillity, which degrades nature by faintneſs and diminution, by obſcuring images and weaken-

weakening effects. In *Chevy Chace* there is not much of either bombaſt or affectation; but there is chill and lifeleſs imbecillity. The ſtory cannot poſſibly be told in a manner that ſhall make leſs impreſſion on the mind.

Before the profound obſervers of the preſent race repoſe too ſecurely on the conſciouſneſs of their ſuperiority to Addiſon, let them conſider his Remarks on Ovid, in which may be found ſpecimens of criticiſm ſufficiently ſubtle and refined; let them peruſe likewiſe his Eſſays on *Wit*, and on the *Pleaſures of Imagination*, in which he founds art on the baſe of nature, and draws the principles of invention from diſpoſitions inherent in the mind of man, with ſkill and elegance,

gance, ſuch as his contemners will not eaſily attain.

As a deſcriber of life and manners, he muſt be allowed to ſtand perhaps the firſt of the firſt rank. His humour, which, as Steele obſerves, is peculiar to himſelf, is ſo happily diffuſed as to give the grace of novelty to domeſtick ſcenes and daily occurrences. He never *outſteps the modeſty of nature*, nor raiſes merriment or wonder by the violation of truth. His figures neither divert by diſtortion, nor amaze by aggravation. He copies life with ſo much fidelity, that he can be hardly ſaid to invent; yet his exhibitions have an air ſo much original, that it is difficult to ſuppoſe them not merely the product of imagination.

As a teacher of wiſdom he may be confidently followed. His religion has nothing in it enthuſiaſtick or ſuperſtitious: he appears neither weakly credulous nor wantonly ſceptical; his morality is neither dangerouſly lax, nor impracticably rigid. All the enchantment of fancy and all the cogency of argument are employed to recommend to the reader his real intereſt, the care of pleaſing the Author of his being. Truth is ſhewn ſometimes as the phantom of a viſion, ſometimes appears half-veiled in an allegory; ſometimes attracts regard in the robes of fancy, and ſometimes ſteps forth in the confidence of reaſon. She wears a thouſand dreſſes, and in all is pleaſing.

Mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet.

His

His proſe is the model of the middle ſtile; on grave ſubjects not formal, on light occaſions not grovelling; pure without ſcrupuloſity, and exact without apparent elaboration; always equable, and always eaſy, without glowing words or pointed ſentences. Addiſon never deviates from his track to ſnatch a grace; he ſeeks no ambitious ornaments, and tries no hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected ſplendour.

It ſeems to have been his principal endeavour to avoid all harſhneſs and ſeverity of diction; he is therefore ſometimes verboſe in his tranſitions and connections,

nections, and ſometimes deſcends too much to the language of converſation; yet if his language had been leſs idiomatical, it might have loſt ſomewhat of its genuine Angliciſm. What he attempted, he performed; he is never feeble, and he did not wiſh to be energetick; he is never rapid, and he never ſtagnates. His ſentences have neither ſtudied amplitude, nor affected brevity: his periods, though not diligently rounded, are voluble and eaſy. Whoever wiſhes to attain an Engliſh ſtile, familiar but not coarſe, and elegant but not oſtentatious, muſt give his days and nights to the volumes of Addiſon.

THE

THE following poem was accidentally overlooked in the Collection, and is therefore inſerted here.

To Her ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS OF WALES, With the Tragedy of CATO, Nov. 1714.

THE Muſe that oft, with ſacred raptures fir'd,
Has generous thoughts of Liberty inſpir'd,
And, boldly riſing for Britannia's laws,
Engag'd great Cato in her country's cauſe,
On You ſubmiſſive waits, with hopes aſſur'd,
By whom the mighty bleſſing ſtands ſecur'd,
And all the glories, that our age adorn,
Are promis'd to a people yet unborn.

No

No longer ſhall the widow'd land bemoan
A broken lineage, and a doubtful throne;
But boaſt her royal progeny's increaſe,
And count the pledges of her future peace.
O born to ſtrengthen and to grace our iſle!
While you, fair Princeſs, in your Offspring ſmile,
Supplying charms to the ſucceeding age,
Each heavenly Daughter's triumphs we preſage;
Already ſee th' illuſtrious youths complain,
And pity Monarchs doom'd to ſigh in vain.

Thou too, the darling of our fond deſires,
Whom Albion, opening wide her arms, requires,
With manly valour and attractive air
Shalt quell the fierce, and captivate the fair.
O England's younger hope! in whom conſpire
The mother's ſweetneſs, and the father's fire!
For thee perhaps, ev'n now, of kingly race
Some dawning beauty blooms in every grace,
Some Carolina, to heaven's dictates true,
Who, while the ſcepter'd rivals vainly ſue,

Thy

Thy inborn worth with conſcious eyes ſhall ſee,
And ſlight th' Imperial diadem for thee.
Pleas'd with the proſpect of ſucceſſive reigns,
The tuneful tribe no more in daring ſtrains
Shall vindicate, with pious fears oppreſt,
Endanger'd rights, and liberty diſtreſt:
To milder ſounds each Muſe ſhall tune the lyre,
And gratitude, and faith to kings inſpire,
And filial love; bid impious diſcord ceaſe,
And ſooth the madding factions into peace;
Or riſe ambitious in more lofty lays,
And teach the nation their new Monarch's praiſe,
Deſcribe his awful look, and godlike mind,
And Cæſar's power with Cato's virtue join'd.
Mean while, bright Princeſs, who, with graceful eaſe
And native majeſty, are form'd to pleaſe,
Behold thoſe Arts with a propitious eye,
That ſuppliant to their great protectreſs fly!

Then ſhall they triumph, and the Britiſh ſtage
Improve her manners, and refine her rage,
More noble characters expoſe to view,
And draw her finiſh'd heroines from You.
Nor You the kind indulgence will refuſe,
Skill'd in the labours of the deathleſs Muſe:
The deathleſs Muſe, with undiminiſh'd rays,
Through diſtant times the lovely dame conveys:
To Gloriana Waller's harp was ſtrung;
The Queen ſtill ſhines, becauſe the Poet ſung.
Ev'n all thoſe graces, in your frame combin'd,
The common fate of mortal charms may find
(Content our ſhort-liv'd praiſes to engage,
The joy and wonder of a ſingle age),
Unleſs ſome Poet, in a laſting ſong,
To late poſterity their fame prolong,
Inſtruct our ſons the radiant form to prize,
And ſee Your beauty with their fathers' eyes.

4 AP 54

BLACKMORE.

SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE is one of thoſe men whoſe writings have attracted much notice, but of whoſe life and manners very little has been communicated, and whoſe lot it has been to be much oftener mentioned by enemies than by friends.

He was the ſon of Robert Blackmore of Corſham in Wiltſhire, ſtiled by Wood *Gentleman*, and ſuppoſed to have been an attorney: having been for ſome time educated in a country-ſchool, he was

ſent at thirteen to Weſtminſter; and in 1668 was entered at Edmund-Hall in Oxford, where he took the degree of M. A. June 3, 1676, and reſided thirteen years; a much longer time than it is uſual to ſpend at the univerſity. He afterwards travelled: at Padua he was made doctor of phyſick; and, after having wandered about a year and a half on the Continent, returned home.

In ſome part of his life, it is not known when, his indigence compelled him to teach a ſchool; an humiliation with which, though it certainly laſted but a little while, his enemies did not forget to reproach him, when he became conſpicuous enough to excite malevolence; and let it be remembered for his

honour, that to have been once a ſchool-maſter is the only reproach which all the perſpicacity of malice, animated by wit, has ever fixed upon his private life.

When he firſt engaged in the ſtudy of phyſick, he enquired, as he ſays, of Dr. Sydenham what authors he ſhould read, and was directed by Sydenham to Don Quixote; *which*, ſaid he, *is a very good book; I read it ſtill.* The perverſeneſs of mankind makes it often miſchievous in men of eminence to give way to merriment. The idle and the illiterate will long ſhelter themſelves under this fooliſh apophthegm.

Whether he reſted ſatisfied with this direction, or ſought for better, he commenced phyſician, and obtained high

eminence and extenſive practice. He became Fellow of the College of Phyſicians April 12, 1687, being one of the thirty which, by the new charter of king James, were added to the former Fellows. His reſidence was in Cheapſide, and his friends were chiefly in the city. In the early part of Blackmore's time a citizen was a term of reproach; and his place of abode was another topick to which his adverſaries had recourſe, in the penury of ſcandal.

Blackmore therefore was made a poet not by neceſſity but inclination, and wrote not for a livelihood but for a fame; or, if he may tell his own motives, for a nobler purpoſe, to engage poetry in the cauſe of Virtue.

I believe

I believe it is peculiar to him, that his firſt publick work was an heroick poem. He was not known as a maker of verſes, till he publiſhed (in 1699) *Prince Arthur*, in ten books, written, as he relates, *by ſuch catches and ſtarts, and in ſuch occaſional uncertain hours as his profeſſion afforded, and for the greateſt part in coffee-houſes, or in paſſing up and down the ſtreets.* For the latter part of this apology he was accuſed of writing *to the rumbling of his chariot-wheels.* He had read, he ſays, *but little poetry throughout his whole life; and for fifteen years before had not written an hundred verſes, except one copy of Latin verſes in praiſe of a friend's book.*

He thinks, and with ſome reaſon, that from ſuch a performance perfection cannot be expected; but he finds another reaſon for the ſeverity of his cenſurers, which he expreſſes in language ſuch as Cheapſide eaſily furniſhed. *I am not free of the Poets Company, having never kiſſed the governor's hands: mine is therefore not ſo much as a permiſſion-poem, but a downright interloper. Thoſe gentlemen who carry on their poetical trade in a joint ſtock, would certainly do what they could to ſink and ruin an unlicenſed adventurer, notwithſtanding I diſturbed none of their factories, nor imported any goods they had ever dealt in.* He had lived in the city till he had learned its note.

That

That *Prince Arthur* found many readers is certain; for in two years it had three editions; a very uncommon inſtance of favourable reception, at a time when literary curioſity was yet confined to particular claſſes of the nation. Such ſucceſs naturally raiſed animoſity; and Dennis attacked it by a formal criticiſm, more tedious and diſguſting than the work which he condemns. To this cenſure may be oppoſed the approbation of Locke and the admiration of Molineux, which are found in their printed Letters. Molineux is particularly delighted with the ſong of *Mopas*, which is therefore ſubjoined to this narrative.

It is remarked by Pope, that what *raiſes the hero often ſinks the man.* Of

Blackmore it may be ſaid, that as the poet ſinks the man riſes; the animadverſions of Dennis, inſolent and contemptuous as they were, raiſed in him no implacable reſentment: he and his critick were afterwards friends; and in one of his latter works he praiſes Dennis as *equal to Boileau in poetry, and ſuperior to him in critical abilities.*

He ſeems to have been more delighted with praiſe than pained by cenſure, and, inſtead of ſlackening, quickened his career. Having in two years produced ten books of *Prince Arthur*, in two years more (1697) he ſent into the world *King Arthur* in twelve. The provocation was now doubled, and the reſentment of wits and criticks may be ſup-

ſuppoſed to have increaſed in proportion. He found, however, advantages more than equivalent to all their outrages; he was this year made one of the phyſicians in ordinary to king William, and advanced by him to the honour of knighthood, with a preſent of a gold chain and a medal.

The malignity of the wits attributed his knighthood to his new poem; but king William was not very ſtudious of poetry, and Blackmore perhaps had other merit: for he ſays in his Dedication to *Alfred*, that *he had a greater part in the ſucceſſion of the houſe of Hanover than ever he had boaſted.*

What Blackmore could contribute to the Succeſſion, or what he imagined him-

himſelf to have contributed, cannot now be known. That he had been of conſiderable uſe, I doubt not but he believed, for I hold him to have been very honeſt; but he might eaſily make a falſe eſtimate of his own importance; thoſe whom their virtue reſtrains from deceiving others, are often diſpoſed by their vanity to deceive themſelves. Whether he promoted the Succeſſion or not, he at leaſt approved it, and adhered invariably to his principles and party through his whole life.

His ardour of poetry ſtill continued; and not long after (1700) he publiſhed a *Paraphraſe on the Book of Job*, and other parts of the Scripture. This performance Dryden, who purſued him with great

great malignity, lived long enough to ridicule in a Prologue.

The wits eaſily confederated againſt him, as Dryden, whoſe favour they almoſt all courted, was his profeſſed adverſary. He had beſides given them reaſon for reſentment, as, in his Preface to *Prince Arthur*, he had ſaid of the Dramatick Writers almoſt all that was alleged afterwards by Collier; but Blackmore's cenſure was cold and general, Collier's was perſonal and ardent; Blackmore taught his reader to diſlike, what Collier incited him to abhor.

In his Preface to *King Arthur* he endeavoured to gain at leaſt one friend, and propitiated Congreve by higher

praiſe

praiſe of his *Mourning Bride* than it has obtained from any other critick.

The ſame year he publiſhed a *Satire on Wit*; a proclamation of defiance which united the poets almoſt all againſt him, and which brought upon him lampoons and ridicule from every ſide. This he doubtleſs foreſaw, and evidently deſpiſed; nor ſhould his dignity of mind be without its praiſe, had he not paid the homage to greatneſs which he denied to genius, and degraded himſelf by conferring that authority over the national taſte, which he takes from the poets, upon men of high rank and wide influence, but of leſs wit, and not greater virtue.

Here

Here is again diſcovered the inhabitant of Cheapſide, whoſe head cannot keep his poetry unmingled with trade. To hinder that intellectual bankruptcy which he affects to fear, he will erect a *Bank for Wit*.

In this poem he juſtly cenſured Dryden's impurities, but praiſed his powers; though in a ſubſequent edition he retained the ſatire and omitted the praiſe. What was his reaſon I know not; Dryden was then no longer in his way.

His head ſtill teemed with heroick poetry, and (1705) he publiſhed *Eliza* in ten books. I am afraid that the world was now weary of contending about Blackmore's heroes; for I do not remember that by any author, ſerious

or

or comical, I have found *Eliza* either praiſed or blamed. She *dropped*, as it ſeems, *dead-born from the preſs*. It is never mentioned, and was never ſeen by me till I borrowed it for the preſent occaſion. Jacob ſays *it is corrected, and reviſed for another impreſſion*; but the labour of reviſion was thrown away.

From this time he turned ſome of his thoughts to the celebration of living characters; and wrote a poem on the *Kit-cat Club*, and *Advice to the Poets how to celebrate the Duke of Marlborough*; but, on occaſion of another year of ſucceſs, thinking himſelf qualified to give more inſtruction, he again wrote a poem of *Advice to a Weaver of Tapiſtry*. Steele was then publiſhing the *Tatler*; and looking

ing round him for ſomething at which he might la gh, unluckily lighted on Sir Richard's work, and treated it with ſuch contempt, that, as Fenton obſerves, he put an end to the ſpecies of writers that gave *Advice to Painters*.

Not long after (1712) he publiſhed *Creation, a philoſophical Poem*, which has been, by my recommendation, inſerted in this collection. Whoever judges of this by any other of Blackmore's performances, will do it injury. The praiſe given it by Addiſon (*Spect.* 339) is too well known to be tranſcribed; but ſome notice is due to the teſtimony of Dennis, who calls it a "philoſophical Poem, "which has equalled that of Lucretius "in the beauty of its verſification, and "infi-

"infinitely ſurpaſſed it in the ſolidity "and ſtrength of its reaſoning."

Why an author ſurpaſſes himſelf, it is natural to enquire. I have heard from Mr. Draper, an eminent bookſeller, an account received by him from Ambroſe Philips, "That Blackmore, as he pro- "ceeded in this poem, laid his manu- "ſcript from time to time before a club "of wits with whom he aſſociated; and "that every man contributed, as he could, "either improvement or correction; ſo "that," ſaid Philips, "there are per- "haps no where in the book thirty lines "together, that now ſtand as they were "originally written."

The relation of Philips, I ſuppoſe, was true; but when all reaſonable, all credible

credible allowance is made for this friendly reviſion, the author will ſtill retain an ample dividend of praiſe; for to him muſt always be aſſigned the plan of the work, the diſtribution of its parts, the choice of topicks, the train of argument, and, what is yet more, the general predominance of philoſophical judgement and poetical ſpirit. Correction ſeldom effects more than the ſuppreſſion of faults: a happy line, or a ſingle elegance, may perhaps be added; but of a large work the general character muſt always remain; the original conſtitution can be very little helped by local remedies; inherent and radical dulneſs will never be much invigorated by extrinſick animation.

This poem, if he had written nothing else, would have tranſmitted him to poſterity among the firſt favourites of the Engliſh Muſe; but to make verſes was his tranſcendent pleaſure, and as he was not deterred by cenſure, he was not ſatiated with praiſe.

He deviated, however, ſometimes into other tracks of literature, and condeſcended to entertain his readers with plain proſe. When the *Spectator* ſtopped, he conſidered the polite world as deſtitute of entertainment; and in concert with Mr. Hughes, who wrote every third paper, publiſhed three times a week the *Lay Monaſtery*, founded on the ſuppoſition that ſome literary men, whoſe characters are deſcribed, had retired to a

houſe in the country to enjoy philoſophical leiſure, and reſolved to inſtruct the publick, by communicating their diſquiſitions and amuſements. Whether any real perſons were concealed under fictitious names is not known. The hero of the club is one Mr. Johnſon; ſuch a conſtellation of excellence, that his character ſhall not be ſuppreſſed, though there is no great genius in the deſign, nor ſkill in the delineation.

" The firſt I ſhall name is Mr. John-
" ſon, a gentleman that owes to Nature
" excellent faculties and an elevated
" genius, and to induſtry and application
" many acquired accompliſhments. His
" taſte is diſtinguiſhing, juſt and deli-

"cate; his judgement clear, and his "reaſon ſtrong, accompanied with an "imagination full of ſpirit, of great "compaſs, and ſtored with refined ideas. "He is a critick of the firſt rank; and, "what is his peculiar ornament, he is "delivered from the oſtentation, male-"volence, and ſupercilious temper, that "ſo often blemiſh men of that charac-"ter. His remarks reſult from the "nature and reaſon of things, and are "formed by a judgement free, and un-"biaſſed by the authority of thoſe who "have lazily followed each other in the "ſame beaten track of thinking, and "are arrived only at the reputation of "acute grammarians and commenta-"tors; men, who have been copying

"one

"one another many hundred years,
"without any improvement; or, if they
"have ventured farther, have only ap-
"plied in a mechanical manner the
"rules of antient criticks to modern
"writings, and with great labour disco-
"vered nothing but their own want of
"judgement and capacity. As Mr.
"Johnson penetrates to the bottom of
"his subject, by which means his ob-
"servations are solid and natural, as well
"as delicate, so his design is always to
"bring to light something useful and
"ornamental; whence his character is
"the reverse to theirs, who have emi-
"nent abilities in insignificant know-
"ledge, and a great felicity in finding
"out trifles. He is no less industrious

"to ſearch out the merit of an author,
"than ſagacious in diſcerning his errors
"and defects; and takes more pleaſure
"in commending the beauties than ex-
"poſing the blemiſhes of a laudable
"writing: like Horace, in a long work,
"he can bear ſome deformities, and
"juſtly lay them on the imperfection of
"human nature, which is incapable of
"faultleſs productions. When an ex-
"cellent *Drama* appears in publick,
"and by its intrinſick worth attracts a
"general applauſe, he is not ſtung with
"envy and ſpleen; nor does he expreſs
"a ſavage nature, in faſtening upon the
"celebrated author, dwelling upon his
"imaginary defects, and paſſing over
"his conſpicuous excellences. He treats

"all

"all writers upon the ſame impartial
"foot; and is not, like the little cri-
"ticks, taken up entirely in finding out
"only the beauties of the ancient, and
"nothing but the errors of the modern
"writers. Never did any one expreſs
"more kindneſs and good-nature to
"young and unfiniſhed authors; he
"promotes their intereſts, protects their
"reputation, extenuates their faults,
"and ſets off their virtues, and by his
"candour guards them from the ſeve-
"rity of his judgement. He is not like
"thoſe dry criticks, who are moroſe
"becauſe they cannot write themſelves,
"but is himſelf maſter of a good vein
"in poetry; and though he does not
"often employ it, yet he has ſometimes

"entertained his friends with his un-
"publiſhed performances."

The reſt of the *Lay Monks* ſeem to be but feeble mortals, in compariſon with the gigantick Johnſon; who yet, with all his abilities, and the help of the fraternity, could drive the publication but to forty papers, which were afterwards collected into a volume, and called in the title a *Sequel to the Spectators.*

Some years afterwards (1716 and 1717) he publiſhed two volumes of Eſſays in proſe, which can be commended only as they are written for the higheſt and nobleſt purpoſe, the promotion of religion. Blackmore's proſe is not the proſe of a poet; for it is

lan-

languid, ſluggiſh, and lifeleſs; his diction is neither daring nor exact, his flow neither rapid nor eaſy, and his periods neither ſmooth nor ſtrong. His account of *Wit* will ſhew with how little clearneſs he is content to think, and how little his thoughts are recommended by his language.

"As to its efficient cauſe, *Wit* owes "its production to an extraordinary and "peculiar temperament in the conſti- "tution of the poſſeſſor of it, in which "is found a concurrence of regular and "exalted ferments, and an affluence of "animal ſpirits, refined and rectified to "a great degree of purity; whence, "being endowed with vivacity, bright-

"neſs,

" neſs, and celerity, as well in their re-
" flexions as direct motions, they be-
" come proper inſtruments for the ſprite-
" ly operations of the mind; by which
" means the imagination can with great
" facility range the wide field of Na-
" ture, contemplate an infinite variety
" of objects, and, by obſerving the ſimi-
" litude and diſagreement of their ſeve-
" ral qualities, ſingle out and abſtract,
" and then ſuit and unite thoſe ideas
" which will beſt ſerve its purpoſe.
" Hence beautiful alluſions, ſurpriſing
" metaphors, and admirable ſentiments,
" are always ready at hand: and while
" the fancy is full of images collected
" from innumerable objects and their
" different qualities, relations, and ha-
" bitudes,

" bitudes, it can at pleaſure dreſs a com-
" mon notion in a ſtrange but becoming
" garb; by which, as before obſerved,
" the ſame thought will appear a new
" one, to the great delight and wonder
" of the hearer. What we call *genius*
" reſults from this particular happy
" complexion in the firſt formation of
" the perſon that enjoys it, and is Na-
" ture's gift, but diverſified by various
" ſpecifick characters and limitations,
" as its active fire is blended and al-
" layed by different proportions of
" phlegm, or reduced and regulated by
" the contraſt of oppoſite ferments.
" Therefore, as there happens in the
" compoſition of a facetious genius a
" greater or leſs, though ſtill an infe-
" rior,

" rior, degree of judgement and pru-
" dence, one man of wit will be varied
" and diſtinguiſhed from another."

In theſe Eſſays he took little care to propitiate the wits; for he ſcorns to avert their malice at the expence of virtue or of truth.

" Several, in their books, have many
" ſarcaſtical and ſpiteful ſtrokes at reli-
" gion in general; while others make
" themſelves pleaſant with the princi-
" ples of the Chriſtian. Of the laſt
" kind, this age has ſeen a moſt auda-
" cious example in the book intituled,
" *A Tale of a Tub.* Had this writing
" been publiſhed in a pagan or popiſh
" nation, who are juſtly impatient of all
" indig-

" indignity offered to the eſtabliſhed re-
" ligion of their country, no doubt but
" the author would have received the
" puniſhment he deſerved. But the fate
" of this impious buffoon is very dif-
" ferent; for in a proteſtant kingdom,
" zealous of their civil and religious
" immunities, he has not only eſcaped
" affronts and the effects of publick re-
" ſentment, but has been careſſed and
" patronized by perſons of great figure,
" and of all denominations. Violent
" party-men, who differed in all things
" beſides, agreed in their turn to ſhew
" particular reſpect and friendſhip to
" this inſolent derider of the worſhip of
" his country, till at laſt the reputed
" writer is not only gone off with im-
" punity,

" punity, but triumphs in his dignity " and preferment. I do not know that " any inquiry or ſearch was ever made " after this writing, or that any reward " was ever offered for the diſcovery of " the author, or that the infamous book " was ever condemned to be burnt in " publick: whether this proceeds from " the exceſſive eſteem and love that men " in power, during the late reign, had " for wit, or their defect of zeal and " concern for the Chriſtian Religion, will " be determined beſt by thoſe who are " beſt acquainted with their character."

In another place he ſpeaks with becoming abhorrence of a *godleſs author* who has burleſqued a Pſalm. This author was ſuppoſed to be Pope, who publiſhed

liſhed a reward for any one that would produce the coiner of the accuſation, but never denied it; and was afterwards the perpetual and inceſſant enemy of Blackmore.

One of his Eſſays is upon the Spleen, which is treated by him ſo much to his own ſatisfaction, that he has publiſhed the ſame thoughts in the ſame words; firſt in the *Lay Monaſtery*; then in the Eſſay; and then in the Preface to a Medical Treatiſe on the Spleen. One paſſage, which I have found already twice, I will here exhibit, becauſe I think it better imagined, and better expreſſed, than could be expected from the common tenour of his proſe:

" —As

"—As the ſeveral combinations of "ſplenetick madneſs and folly produce "an infinite variety of irregular under- "ſtanding, ſo the amicable accommo- "dation and alliance between ſeveral "virtues and vices produce an equal "diverſity in the diſpoſitions and man- "ners of mankind; whence it comes to "paſs, that as many monſtrous and ab- "ſurd productions are found in the "moral as in the intellectual world. "How ſurpriſing is it to obſerve among "the leaſt culpable men, ſome whoſe "minds are attracted by heaven and "earth, with a ſeeming equal force; "ſome who are proud of humility; "others who are cenſorious and uncha- "ritable, yet ſelf-denying and devout;

"ſome

" ſome who join contempt of the world
" with ſordid avarice; and others, who
" preſerve a great degree of piety, with
" ill-nature and ungoverned paſſions:
" nor are inſtances of this inconſiſtent
" mixture leſs frequent among bad men,
" where we often, with admiration, ſee
" perſons at once generous and unjuſt,
" impious lovers of their country, and
" flagitious heroes, good-natured ſhar-
" pers, immoral men of honour, and
" libertines who will ſooner die than
" change their religion; and though it
" is true that repugnant coalitions of ſo
" high a degree are found but in a part
" of mankind, yet none of the whole
" maſs, either good or bad, are intirely
" exempted from ſome abſurd mixture."

He about this time (Aug. 22, 1716) became one of the *Elects* of the College of Phyſicians; and was ſoon after (Oct. 1) choſen *Cenſor*. He ſeems to have arrived late, whatever was the reaſon, at his medical honours.

Having ſucceeded ſo well in his book on *Creation*, by which he eſtabliſhed the great principle of all Religion, he thought his undertaking imperfect, unleſs he likewiſe enforced the truth of Revelation; and for that purpoſe added another poem on *Redemption*. He likewiſe wrote, before his *Creation*, three books on the *Nature of Man*.

The lovers of muſical devotion have always wiſhed for a more happy metrical verſion than they have yet obtained

of

of the book of Pſalms; this wiſh the piety of Blackmore led him to gratify, and he produced (1721) *a new Verſion of the* Pſalms *of* David, *fitted to the tunes uſed in Churches*; which, being recommended by the archbiſhops and many biſhops, obtained a licenſe for its admiſſion into publick worſhip; but no admiſſion has it yet obtained, nor has it any right to come where Brady and Tate have got poſſeſſion. Blackmore's name muſt be added to thoſe of many others, who, by the ſame attempt, have obtained only the praiſe of meaning well.

He was not yet deterred from heroick poetry; there was another monarch of this iſland, for he did not fetch his he-

roes from foreign countries, whom he conſidered as worthy of the Epick Muſe, and he dignified Alfred (1723) with twelve books. But the opinion of the nation was now ſettled; a hero introduced by Blackmore was not likely to find either reſpect or kindneſs; *Alfred* took his place by *Eliza* in ſilence and darkneſs: benevolence was aſhamed to favour, and malice was weary of inſulting. Of his four Epick Poems the firſt had ſuch reputation and popularity as enraged the criticks; the ſecond was at leaſt known enough to be ridiculed; the two laſt had neither friends nor enemies.

Contempt is a kind of gangrene, which if it ſeizes one part of a character corrupts all the reſt by degrees.

Blackmore, being deſpiſed as a poet, was in time neglected as a phyſician; his practice, which was once invidiouſly great, forſook him in the latter part of his life; but being by nature, or by principle, averſe from idleneſs, he employed his unwelcome leiſure in writing books on phyſick, and teaching others to cure thoſe whom he could himſelf cure no longer. I know not whether I can enumerate all the treatiſes by which he has endeavoured to diffuſe the art of healing; for there is ſcarcely any diſtemper, of dreadful name, which he has not taught his reader how to oppoſe. He has written on the ſmall-pox, with a vehement invective againſt inoculation; on conſumptions, the ſpleen, the gout,

the rheumatiſm, the king's-evil, the dropſy, the jaundice, the ſtone, the diabetes, and the plague.

Of thoſe books, if I had read them, it could not be expected that I ſhould be able to give a critical account. I have been told that there is ſomething in them of vexation and diſcontent, diſcovered by a perpetual attempt to degrade phyſick from its ſublimity, and to repreſent it as attainable without much previous or concomitant learning. By the tranſient glances which I have thrown upon them, I have obſerved an affected contempt of the Ancients, and a ſupercilious deriſion of tranſmitted knowledge. Of this indecent arrogance the following quotation from

his

his Preface to the Treatiſe on the Small-pox will afford a ſpecimen; in which, when the reader finds what I fear is true, that when he was cenſuring Hippocrates he did not know the difference between *aphoriſm* and *apophthegm*, he will not pay much regard to his determinations concerning ancient learning.

"As for this book of Aphoriſms, it "is like my lord Bacon's of the ſame "title, a book of jeſts, or a grave col-"lection of trite and trifling obſerva-"tions; of which though many are "true and certain, yet they ſignify "nothing, and may afford diverſion, "but no inſtruction; moſt of them "being much inferior to the ſayings of "wiſe men of Greece, which yet are ſo

" low and mean, that we are entertained
" every day with more valuable ſenti-
" ments at the table-converſation of in-
" genious and learned men."

I am unwilling however to leave him in total diſgrace, and will therefore quote from another Preface a paſſage leſs reprehenſible.

" Some gentlemen have been diſinge-
" nuous and unjuſt to me, by wreſting
" and forcing my meaning in the Pre-
" face to another book, as if I con-
" demned and expoſed all learning,
" though they knew I declared that I
" greatly honoured and eſteemed all men
" of ſuperior literature and erudition;
" and that I only undervalued falſe or
" ſuperficial learning, that ſignifies no-
" thing

"thing for the ſervice of mankind; and "that, as to phyſick, I expreſsly af- "firmed that learning muſt be joined "with native genius to make a phyſi- "cian of the firſt rank; but if thoſe "talents are ſeparated, I aſſerted, and "do ſtill inſiſt, that a man of native ſa- "gacity and diligence will prove a more "able and uſeful practiſer, than a heavy "notional ſcholar, encumbered with a "heap of confuſed ideas."

He was not only a poet and a phyſi- cian, but produced likewiſe a work of a different kind, *A true and impartial Hiſtory of the Conſpiracy againſt King* William, *of glorious Memory, in the Year* 1695. This I have never ſeen, but ſuppoſe it at leaſt compiled with integrity. He engaged

gaged likewiſe in theological controverſy, and wrote two books againſt the Arians; *Juſt Prejudices againſt the* Arian *Hypotheſis*; and *Modern* Arians *unmaſked*. Another of his works is *Natural Theology, or Moral Duties conſidered apart from Poſitive; with ſome Obſervations on the Deſirableneſs and Neceſſity of a ſupernatural Revelation*. This was the laſt book that he publiſhed. He left behind him *The accompliſhed Preacher, or an Eſſay upon Divine Eloquence*; which was printed after his death by Mr. White of Nayland in Eſſex, the miniſter who attended his deathbed, and teſtified the fervent piety of his laſt hours. He died on the eighth of October, 1729.

BLACK-

BLACKMORE, by the unremitted enmity of the wits, whom he provoked more by his virtue than his dulneſs, has been expoſed to worſe treatment than he deſerved; his name was ſo long uſed to point every epigram upon dull writers, that it became at laſt a bye-word of contempt: but it deſerves obſervation that malignity takes hold only of his writings, and that his life paſſed without reproach, even when his boldneſs of reprehenſion naturally turned upon him many eyes deſirous to eſpy faults, which many tongues would have made haſte to publiſh. But thoſe who could not blame, could at leaſt forbear to praiſe,

praiſe, and therefore of his private life and domeſtick character there are no memorials.

As an author he may juſtly claim the honours of magnanimity. The inceſſant attacks of his enemies, whether ſerious or merry, are never diſcovered to have diſturbed his quiet, or to have leſſened his confidence in himſelf; they neither awed him to ſilence nor to caution; they neither provoked him to petulance, nor depreſſed him to complaint. While the diſtributors of literary fame were endeavouring to depreciate and degrade him, he either deſpiſed or defied them, wrote on as he had written before, and never turned aſide to quiet them by civility or repreſs them by confutation.

He

He depended with great ſecurity on his own powers, and perhaps was for that reaſon leſs diligent in peruſing books. His literature was, I think, but ſmall. What he knew of antiquity, I ſuſpect him to have gathered from modern compilers: but though he could not boaſt of much critical knowledge, his mind was ſtored with general principles, and he left minute reſearches to thoſe whom he conſidered as little minds.

With this diſpoſition he wrote moſt of his poems. Having formed a magnificent deſign, he was careleſs of particular and ſubordinate elegancies; he ſtudied no niceties of verſification; he waited for no felicities of fancy; but caught his firſt thoughts in the firſt words

in

in which they were preſented: nor does it appear that he ſaw beyond his own performances, or had ever elevated his views to that ideal perfection which every genius born to excel is condemned always to purſue, and never overtake. In the firſt ſuggeſtions of his imagination he acquieſced; he thought them good, and did not ſeek for better.

The poem on *Creation* has, however, the appearance of more circumſpection; it wants neither harmony of numbers, accuracy of thought, nor elegance of diction: it has either been written with great care, or, what cannot be imagined of ſo long a work, with ſuch felicity as made care leſs neceſſary.

Its

Its two conſtituent parts are ratiocination and deſcription. To reaſon in verſe is allowed to be difficult; but Blackmore not only reaſons in verſe, but very often reaſons poetically; and finds the art of uniting ornament with ſtrength, and eaſe with cloſeneſs. This is a ſkill which Pope might have condeſcended to learn from him, when he needed it ſo much in his Moral Eſſays.

In his deſcriptions, both of life and nature, the poet and the philoſopher happily co-operate; truth is recommended by elegance, and elegance ſuſtained by truth.

In the ſtructure and order of the poem not only the greater parts are properly conſecutive, but the didactick and

illuſtrative paragraphs are ſo happily mingled, that labour is relieved by pleaſure, and the attention is led on through a long ſucceſſion of varied excellence to the original poſition, the fundamental principle of wiſdom and of virtue.

AS

AS the heroick poems of Blackmore are now little read, it is thought proper to inſert, as a ſpecimen from *Prince Arthur*, the ſong of *Mopas* mentioned by Molineux.

But that which Arthur with moſt pleaſure heard,
Were noble ſtrains, by Mopas ſung the bard,
Who to his harp in lofty verſe began,
And through the ſecret maze of Nature ran.
He the great Spirit ſung, that all things fill'd,
That the tumultuous waves of Chaos ſtill'd;
Whoſe nod diſpos'd the jarring ſeeds to peace,
And made the wars of hoſtile Atoms ceaſe.

All Beings we in fruitful Nature find,
Proceeded from the great Eternal Mind;
Streams of his unexhauſted ſpring of power,
And cheriſh'd with his influence, endure.
He ſpread the pure cerulean fields on high,
And arch'd the chambers of the vaulted ſky
Which he, to ſuit their glory with their height,
Adorn'd with globes, that reel, as drunk with light.
His hand directed all the tuneful ſpheres,
He turn'd their orbs, and poliſh'd all the ſtars.
He fill'd the Sun's vaſt lamp with golden light,
And bid the ſilver Moon adorn the night.
He ſpread the airy Ocean without ſhores,
Where birds are wafted with their feather'd oars.
Then ſung the bard how the light vapours riſe
From the warm earth, and cloud the ſmiling ſkies.
He ſung how ſome, chill'd in their airy flight,
Fall ſcatter'd down in pearly dew by night.

How

How ſome, rais'd higher, ſit in ſecret ſteams
On the reflected points of bounding beams;
Till, chill'd with cold, they ſhade th' etherial plain,
Then on the thirſty earth deſcend in rain.
How ſome, whoſe parts a ſlight contexture ſhow,
Sink hovering through the air, in fleecy ſnow.
How part is ſpun in ſilken threads, and clings
Entangled in the graſs in glewy ſtrings.
How others ſtamp to ſtones, with ruſhing ſound
Fall from their cryſtal quarries to the ground.
How ſome are laid in trains, that kindled fly
In harmleſs fires by night, about the ſky.
How ſome in winds blow with impetuous force,
And carry ruin where they bend their courſe:
While ſome conſpire to form a gentle breeze,
To fan the air, and play among the trees.
How ſome, enrag'd, grow turbulent and loud,
Pent in the bowels of a frowning cloud;

That cracks, as if the axis of the world
Was broke, and heaven's bright towers were
downwards hurl'd.
He ſung how earth's wide ball, at Jove's command,
Did in the midſt on airy columns ſtand.
And how the ſoul of plants, in priſon held,
And bound with ſluggiſh fetters, lies conceal'd,
Till with the Spring's warm beams, almoſt releaſt
From the dull weight, with which it lay oppreſt,
Its vigour ſpreads, and makes the teeming earth
Heave up, and labour with the ſprouting birth:
The active ſpirit freedom ſeeks in vain,
It only works and twiſts a ſtronger chain.
Urging its priſon's ſides to break away,
It makes that wider, where 'tis forced to ſtay:
Till, having form'd its living houſe, it rears
Its head, and in a tender plant appears.
Hence ſprings the oak, the beauty of the grove,
Whoſe ſtately trunk fierce ſtorms can ſcarcely
move.

Hence

Hence grows the cedar, hence the ſwelling vine
Does round the elm its purple cluſters twine.
Hence painted flowers the ſmiling gardens bleſs,
Both with their fragrant ſcent and gaudy dreſs.
Hence the white lily in full beauty grows,
Hence the blue violet, and bluſhing roſe.
He ſung how ſun-beams brood upon the earth,
And in the glebe hatch ſuch a numerous birth;
Which way the genial warmth in Summer ſtorms
Turns putrid vapours to a bed of worms;
How rain, transform'd by this prolifick power,
Falls from the clouds an animated ſhower.
He ſung the embryo's growth within the womb,
And how the parts their various ſhapes aſſume.
With what rare art the wondrous ſtructure's wrought,
From one crude maſs to ſuch perfection brought;
That no part uſeleſs none miſplac'd we ſee,
None are forgot, and more would monſtrous be."

SHEFFIELD,

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

JOHN SHEFFIELD, deſcended from a long ſeries of illuſtrious anceſtors, was born in 1649, the ſon of Edmund earl of Mulgrave, who died 1658. The young lord was put into the hands of a tutor, with whom he was ſo little ſatisfied, that he got rid of him in a ſhort time, and at an age not exceeding twelve years re-

ſolved to educate himſelf. Such a purpoſe, formed at ſuch an age, and ſucceſsfully proſecuted, delights as it is ſtrange, and inſtructs as it is real.

His literary acquiſitions are more wonderful, as the years in which they are commonly made were ſpent in the tumult of a military life, or the gaiety of a court. When war was declared againſt the Dutch, he went at ſeventeen on board the ſhip in which prince Rupert and the duke of Albemarle ſailed, with the command of the fleet; but by contrariety of winds they were reſtrained from action. His zeal for the king's ſervice was recompenſed by the command of one of the independent

dent troops of horſe, then raiſed to protect the coaſt.

Next year he received a ſummons to parliament, which, as he was then but eighteen years old, the earl of Northumberland cenſured as at leaſt indecent, and his objection was allowed. He had a quarrel with the earl of Rocheſter, which he has perhaps too oſtentatiouſly related, as Rocheſter's ſurviving ſiſter, the lady Sandwich, is ſaid to have told him with very ſharp reproaches.

When another Dutch war (1672) broke out, he went again a voluntier in the ſhip which the celebrated lord Oſſory commanded; and there made, as he relates, two curious remarks.

"I have obſerved two things, which "I dare affirm, though not generally "believed. One was, that the wind of "a cannot-bullet, though flying never "ſo near, is incapable of doing the leaſt "harm; and, indeed, were it otherwiſe, "no man above deck would eſcape. "The other was, that a great ſhot may "be ſometimes avoided, even as it flies, "by changing one's ground a little; "for, when the wind ſometimes blew "away the ſmoak, it was ſo clear a ſun-"ſhiney day that we could eaſily per-"ceive the bullets (that were half-"ſpent) fall into the water, and from "thence bound up again among us, "which gives ſufficient time for making "a ſtep or two on any ſide; though, in

"ſo

"so swift a motion, 'tis hard to judge
"well in what line the bullet comes,
"which, if mistaken, may by removing
"cost a man his life, instead of saving
"it."

His behaviour was so favourably represented by lord Ossory, that he was advanced to the command of the Katherine, the best second-rate ship in the navy.

He afterwards raised a regiment of foot, and commanded it as colonel. The land-forces were sent a-shore by prince Rupert; and he lived in the camp very familiarly with Schomberg. He was then appointed colonel of the old Holland regiment, together with his own; and had the promise of a garter, which

he obtained in his twenty-fifth year. He was likewiſe made gentleman of the bed-chamber.

He afterwards went into the French ſervice, to learn the art of war under Turenne, but ſtaid only a ſhort time. Being by the duke of Monmouth oppoſed in his pretenſions to the firſt troop of horſe-guards, he, in return, made Monmouth ſuſpected by the duke of York. He was however, not long after, when the unlucky Monmouth fell into diſgrace, recompenſed with the lieutenancy of Yorkſhire and the government of Hull.

Thus rapidly did he make his way both to military and civil honours and employments; yet, buſy as he was, he

did not neglect his ſtudies, but at leaſt cultivated poetry; in which he muſt have been early conſidered as uncommonly ſkilful, if it be true which is reported, that, when he was yet not twenty years old, his recommendation advanced Dryden to the laurel.

The Moors having beſieged Tangier, he was ſent (1680) with two thouſand men to its relief. A ſtrange ſtory is told of danger to which he was intentionally expoſed in a leaky ſhip, to gratify ſome reſentful jealouſy of the king, whoſe health he therefore would never permit at his table, till he ſaw himſelf in a ſafer place. His voyage was proſperouſly performed in three weeks, and the Moors without a conteſt retired before him.

In this voyage he compoſed the *Viſion*; a licentious poem, ſuch as was faſhionable in thoſe times, with little power of invention, or propriety of ſentiment.

At his return he found the king kind, who perhaps had never been angry, and he continued a wit and a courtier as before.

At the ſucceſſion of king James, to whom he was intimately known, and by whom he thought himſelf beloved, he naturally expected ſtill brighter ſunſhine; but all know how ſoon that reign began to gather clouds. His expectations were not diſappointed; he was immediately admitted into the privy council, and made lord chamberlain. He

accepted

accepted a place in the high commiſſion, without knowledge, as he declared after the Revolution, of its illegality. Having few religious ſcruples, he attended the king to maſs, and kneeled with the reſt; but had no diſpoſition to receive the Romiſh Faith, or to force it upon others; for when the prieſts, encouraged by his appearances of compliance, attempted to convert him, he told them, as Burnet has recorded, that he was willing to receive inſtruction, and that he had taken much pains to believe in God who made the world and all men in it; but that he ſhould not be eaſily perſuaded *that man was quits, and made God again.*

A pointed

A pointed ſentence is beſtowed by ſucceſſive tranſmiſſion on the laſt whom it will fit: this cenſure of tranſubſtantiation, whatever be its value, was uttered long ago by Anne Aſkew, one of the firſt ſufferers for the Proteſtant Religion, who in the time of Henry VIII. was tortured in the Tower; concerning which there is reaſon to wonder that it was not known to the hiſtorian of the Reformation.

In the Revolution he acquieſced, though he did not promote it. There was once a deſign of aſſociating him in the invitation of the prince of Orange; but the earl of Shrewſbury diſcouraged the attempt, by declaring that Mulgrave would never concur. This king

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William afterwards told him, and aſked what he would have done if the propoſal had been made. *Sir*, ſaid he, *I would have diſcovered it to the king whom I then ſerved.* To which king William replied, *I cannot blame you.*

Finding king James irremediably excluded, he voted for the conjunctive ſovereignty, upon this principle, that he thought the titles of the prince and his conſort equal, and it would pleaſe the prince their protector to have a ſhare in the ſovereignty. This vote gratified king William; yet, either by the king's diſtruſt or his own diſcontent, he lived ſome years without employment. He looked on the king with malevolence, and, if his verſes or his proſe may be

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credited, with contempt. He was, notwithſtanding this averſion or indifference, made marquis of Normanby (1694); but ſtill oppoſed the court on ſome important queſtions; yet at laſt he was received into the cabinet council, with a penſion of three thouſand pounds.

At the acceſſion of queen Anne, whom he is ſaid to have courted when they were both young, he was highly favoured. Before her coronation (1702) ſhe made him lord privy ſeal, and ſoon after lord lieutenant of the North-riding of Yorkſhire. He was then named commiſſioner for treating with the Scots about the Union; and was made next year firſt duke of Normanby, and then of Buckinghamſhire, there being ſuſpect-

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ed to be ſomewhere a latent claim to the title of Buckingham.

Soon after, becoming jealous of the duke of Marlborough, he reſigned the privy ſeal, and joined the diſcontentd Tories in a motion extremely offenſive to the Queen, for inviting the princeſs Sophia to England. The Queen courted him back with an offer no leſs than that of the chancellorſhip, which he refuſed. He now retired from buſineſs, and built that houſe in the Park, which is now the Queen's, upon ground granted by the Crown.

When the miniſtry was changed (1710), he was made lord chamberlain of the houſehold, and concurred in all tranſactions of that time, except that he

he endeavoured to protect the Catalans. After the Queen's death, he became a conſtant opponent of the Court; and, having no publick buſineſs, is ſuppoſed to have amuſed himſelf by writing his two tragedies. He died February 24, 1720-21.

He was thrice married; by his two firſt wives he had no children: by his third, who was the daughter of king James by the counteſs of Dorcheſter, and the widow of the earl of Angleſey, he had, beſides other children that died early, a ſon born in 1716, who died in 1735, and put an end to the line of Sheffield. It is obſervable that the Duke's three wives were all widows. The Dutcheſs died in 1742.

His

His character is not to be propoſed as worthy of imitation. His religion he may be ſuppoſed to have learned from Hobbes; and his morality was ſuch as naturally proceeds from looſe opinions. His ſentiments with reſpect to women he picked up in the court of Charles, and his principles concerning property were ſuch as a gaming-table ſupplies. He was cenſured as covetous, and has been defended by an inſtance of inattention to his affairs, as if a man might not at once be corrupted by avarice and idleneſs. He is ſaid, however, to have had much tenderneſs, and to have been very ready to apologiſe for his violences of paſſion.

He is introduced into this collection only as a poet, and, if we credit the teſtimony of his contemporaries, he was a poet of no vulgar rank. But favour and flattery are now at an end; criticiſm is no longer ſoftened by his bounties or awed by his ſplendor, and being able to take a more ſteady view, diſcovers him to be a writer that ſometimes glimmers, but rarely ſhines, feebly laborious, and at beſt but pretty. His ſongs are upon common topicks; he hopes, and grieves, and repents, and deſpairs, and rejoices, like any other maker of little ſtanzas: to be great he hardly tries; to be gay is hardly in his power.

In the Eſſay on Satire he was always ſuppoſed to have had the help of Dry-

den. His Eſſay on Poetry is the great work, for which he was praiſed by Roſcommon, Dryden, and Pope, and doubtleſs by many more whoſe eulogies have periſhed.

Upon this piece he appears to have ſet a high value; for he was all his life improving it by ſucceſſive reviſals, ſo that there is ſcarcely any poem to be found of which the laſt edition differs more from the firſt. Amongſt other changes, mention is made of ſome compoſitions of Dryden, which were written after the Eſſay.

At the time when this work firſt appeared, Milton's fame was not yet fully eſtabliſhed, and therefore Taſſo and Spenſer were ſet before him. The

two laſt lines were theſe. The Epick Poet, ſays he,

Muſt above Milton's lofty flights prevail,
Succeed where great Torquato, and where greater Spenſer fail.

The laſt line in ſucceeding editions was ſhortened, and the order of names continued; but now Milton is at laſt advanced to the higheſt place, and the paſſage thus adjuſted,

Muſt above Taſſo's lofty flights prevail,
Succeed where Spenſer, and ev'n Milton fail.

Amendments are ſeldom made without ſome token of a rent: *lofty* does not ſuit Taſſo ſo well as Milton.

One

One celebrated line ſeems to be borrowed. The Eſſay calls a perfect character

A faultleſs monſter which the world ne'er ſaw.

Scaliger in his poems terms Virgil *ſine labe monſtrum*. Sheffield can ſcarcely be ſuppoſed to have read Scaliger's poetry; perhaps he found the words in a quotation.

Of this Eſſay, which Dryden has exalted ſo highly, it may be juſtly ſaid that the precepts are judicious, ſometimes new, and often happily expreſſed; but there are, after all the emendations, many weak lines, and ſome ſtrange appearances of negligence; as, when he gives the laws of elegy, he inſiſts upon con-

connection and coherence, without which, ſays he,

'Tis epigram, 'tis point, 'tis what you will;
But not an elegy, nor writ with ſkill,
No Panegyrick, nor a Cooper's Hill.

Who would not ſuppoſe that Waller's Panegyrick and Denham's Cooper's Hill were Elegies?

His verſes are often inſipid; but his memoirs are lively and agreeable; he had the perſpicuity and elegance of an hiſtorian, but not the fire and fancy of a poet.

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